

THE  
ARGOSY

87566

A Magazine of Tales, Travels, Essays, and Poems

CHRISTMAS VOLUME

1867



STRAHAN & CO, MAGAZINE-PUBLISHERS

56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON





# THE ARGOSY.

## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

### PART II.—HIS YOUTH.

#### CHAPTER VII.

ERIC ERICSON.

ROBERT sprang across the dividing chasm, clasped Ericson's hand in both of his, looked up into his face, and stood speechless. Ericson returned the salute with a still kindness, tender and still. His face was like a gray morning sky of summer from whose level cloud-fields rain will fall before noon.

"So it is you," he said, "that play the violin so well!"  
"Weel or ill, I was doin' my best," answered Robert. "But eh! Mr. Ericson, I wad hae dune better gin I had kent 'at ye was hearkenin'."

"You couldn't do better than your best," returned Eric, smiling.

"Ay, but yer best micht aye grow better, ye ken," persisted Robert.

"Come into my room," said Ericson. "This is Friday night, and there is nothing but chapel to-morrow. So we'll have a talk instead of work. Mind, if there's anything I can help you with, you must let me know."

In another moment they were seated by a tiny coal-fire in a room one side of which was the slope of the roof, with a large, low skylight looking seawards. Here, somehow, the sound of the distant waves made itself heard. They beat, as it were, upon the drum of the skylight, through all the world of mist that lay between it and them—dimly, vaguely—but ever and again with a fresh burst of gathered force upon the low desolate shore, and thence upon Ericson's roof.

"I am sorry I have nothing to offer you," said Ericson.

"You remind me of Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate of the temple," replied Robert, trying to speak English like the Northerner, but breaking down in the attempt as his heart got the better of him. "Eh! Mr. Ericson, gin ye kent what it is to me to see the face o' ye, ye wadna speyk like that. Jist lat me sit an' leuk at ye, an' I want nae mair."

A smile broke up the cold, sad, gray light of the young eagle-face. Stern

at once and gentle when in repose, its smile was as the summer of some lovely land where neither the heat nor the sun shall smite them. The youth laid his hand upon the boy's head, then withdrew it hastily, and the smile vanished like the sun behind a cloud. Robert saw it, and as if he had been David before Saul, rose instinctively and said,

"I'll gang for my fiddle. Hoots! I hae broken ane o' the strings o' 't. We maun bide till the morn. But I want nae fiddle mysel' whan I hear the muckle plash o' the great water oot there."

"You're young yet, my boy, or you might hear voices in that sea!—I've lived in the sound of it all my days. When I can't rest at night, I hear a moaning and crying in the dark, and I lie and listen till I can't tell whether I'm a man or some God-forsaken sea in the sunless North."

"Sometimes I believe in naething but my fiddle," answered Robert.

"Yes, yes. But when it comes into you, my boy! You won't hear much music in the cry of the sea after that. As long as you've got it at arm's length, it's all very well. It's interesting then, and you can talk to your fiddle about it, and make poetry about it," said Ericson, with a smile of self-contempt. "But as soon as the real earnest comes that is all over. The sea-moan is the cry of a tortured world then. The music of it is gone. Its hollow bed is the cup of the world's pain, ever rolling from side to side and dashing 'hopelessly over its lip. Of all that might be, ought to be, nothing to be had!—I could get music out of it once. Look here. I could trifle like that once."

He half rose, then dropped on his chair again, as if ashamed of what he was going to do. But Robert's believing eyes justified any amount of confidence, and Ericson had never yet had any one to talk to. He looked in the boy's face, rose again, opened a cupboard at his side, took out some papers, threw them on the table, and walked towards the door.

"Which of your strings is broken?" he asked.

"The third," answered Robert.

"I will go and get you one," said Ericson; and before Robert could reply he was down the stair. Robert heard him cough, and the door shut, and he was gone in the rain and fog.

Bewildered, unhappy, ready to fly after him, yet irresolute, Robert almost mechanically turned over the papers upon the little deal table. He was soon arrested by the following verses, headed

#### A NOONDAY MELODY.\*

Everything goes to its rest;  
The hills are asleep in the noon;  
And life is as still in its nest  
As the moon when she looks on a moon  
In the depths of a calm river's breast  
As it steals through a midnight in June.

\* The author desires to have it understood that not a single poem in this tale is of his own composition. The poems are, however, his property, and appear for the first time in print.

The streams have forgotten the sea ;  
 In the dream of their musical sound ;  
 The sunlight is thick on the tree,  
 And the shadows lie warm on the ground—  
 So still, you may watch them and see  
 Every breath that awakens around,  
 The churchyard lies still in the heat,  
 With its handful of mouldering bone ;  
 As still as the long stalk of wheat  
 In the shadow that sits by the stone ;  
 As still as the grass at my feet  
 When I walk in the meadows alone.  
 The waves are asleep on the main,  
 And the ships are asleep on the wave ;  
 And the thoughts are as still in my brain  
 As the echo that sleeps in the cave ;  
 All rest from their labour and pain—  
 Then why should not I in my grave ?

His heart ready to burst with sorrow, admiration, and devotion, which no criticism interfered to qualify, Robert rushed out into the darkness, and sped, fleet-footed, along the only path which Ericson could have taken. Why he did so he could not have told. Simply, he could not bear to be left in the house while his friend was out in the rain.

He quite expected to join him before he reached the new town, for there was a path only on one side of the way, so that there was no danger of passing him in the dark. As he ran he heard the moaning of the sea coming louder through the night. There was a storm somewhere, away in the deep spaces of its dark bosom, and its lips muttered of its far unrest. When the sun rose it would be seen misty and gray, tossing about under the one rain cloud that like a thinner ocean overspread the heavens—tossing like an animal that would fain lie down and be at peace but could not compose its unwieldy strength.

Suddenly Robert slackened his speed, ceased running, stood, gazed through the darkness at a figure a few yards before him.

An old wall, bowed with age and the weight behind it, flanked the road in this part. Doors in this wall, with a few steps in front of them and more behind, led up into gardens upon a slope, at the top of which stood the houses to which they belonged. On the steps in front of one of these doors stood the figure. It stood with its head bowed upon its hands ; but when Robert was within a few feet it lifted its face.

"Mr. Ericson !" exclaimed Robert. "Ye'll get yer deith gin ye stan' that gait i' the weat."

"Amen," said Ericson, with a smile that glimmered wan through the misty night. Then changing his tone, he went on : "What are you after, Robert ?"

"You," answered Robert. "I cudna bide to be left my lane whan I might be wi' ye a' the time—gin ye wad lat me. Ye war oot o' the hoose afore I weel kent what ye was aboot. It's no a fit nicht to be stan'in there, mair by token 'at ye're no the ablest to bide could an' weat."

"I've stood a good deal of both in my time," returned Ericson; "but come along. We'll go and get that fiddle-string."

"Dinna ye think it wad be fully better to gang hame?" Robert ventured to suggest.

"What would be the good of that? I am in no mood for Plato to-night," returned Ericson, trying hard to keep from shivering, but without success.

"Ye hae an ill cauld upo' ye," persisted Robert; "an' ye maun be as weet's a dishclood."

Ericson laughed.

"Come along," he said. "A walk will do me good. We'll get the string, and then you shall play to me. That will do me more good yet."

Robert made no more opposition, and they walked together to the new town. Robert bought the string, and they set out, as he thought, to return.

But Ericson did not yet seem inclined to go home. At all events they emerged upon the quay.

There were not many vessels. One of them was the Antwerp tub already known to Robert. He recognized her even in the dull light of the quay lamps. Her captain being a prudent and well-to-do Dutchman, never slept on shore; he preferred saving his money; and therefore, as the friends were passing along, Robert caught sight of him walking his own deck and smoking a long clay pipe before turning in.

"A fine nicht, capt'n," said Robert.

"It does rain," returned the captain. "Will you come on board and have one schnapps before you turn in?"

"I hae a frien' wi' me here," said Robert, feeling his way.

"Let him come and be welcomed."

Ericson making no objection, they went on board, and down into the neat little cabin, which was all the roomier for the straightness of the vessel's quarter. The captain got out a square, coffin-shouldered bottle, and having respect to the condition of their garments, neither of the young men refused his hospitality, though Robert did feel a little compunction at the thought of the horror it would have caused his grandmother. Then the Dutchman got out his violin and asked Robert to play a Scotch air, which he began to do. But in the middle of it his eyes fell on Ericson, and he stopped at once. Ericson was sitting on a locker, leaning back against the side of the vessel. His eyes were open and fixed, and he seemed quite unconscious of what was passing. Robert fancied at first that the hollands he had taken had gone to his head, but he saw at the same moment, from the state of his glass, that he had scarcely tasted it. In great alarm, they tried to rouse him, and at length succeeded. He closed his eyes, opened them again, rose up, and was going away.

"What's the maitter wi' ye, Mr. Ericson?" said Robert, in distress.

"Nothing, nothing," answered Ericson, in a strange voice. "I fell asleep I believe. It was very bad manners, captain, and I beg your pardon. I believe I am overtired."

The Dutchman was as kind as possible, and begged Ericson to stay the night and occupy his berth. But he insisted on going home, although it was

clear that he was unfit for such a long walk. They bade the captain good-night, went on shore, and set out, Ericson leaning rather heavily upon Robert's arm. Robert led him up Marischal Street.

The steep ascent was too much for Ericson. He stood still upon the bridge and leaned half his body upon the wall of it. Robert stood beside, almost in despair as to how he should get him home.

"Have patience with me, Robert," said Ericson, in his own natural voice. "I shall be able to go on presently. I don't know what's come to me. If I had been a Celt, now, I should have said that I had had a second sight. But I am, as far as I know, pure Northman."

"What did you see?" asked Robert, with the strange feeling growing upon him that miles of the spirit world, if one may be allowed such a contradiction in words, lay between him and his friend.

Ericson returned no answer. Robert feared he was going to faint or relapse into the condition from which he had just been rescued; but in a moment more he lifted himself up and bent again to the *bras*.

They advanced slowly till they reached the middle of the Gallowgate.

"I can't," said Ericson feebly, and half leaned half fell against the wall of a bookshop by which they were passing.

"Come into the shop," said Robert. "I ken the man. He'll lat ye sit doon."

He just managed to get him in—pale as death. The bookseller got a chair. Ericson sank into it. Robert was almost at his wits' end. There was no such thing as a cab known in Aberdeen for many years after the date of my story. As he was holding a glass of water to the poor fellow's lips,—"Robert, Robert," he heard, in a low earnest whisper from the door; and there, round the door-cheek, peered the white face and red head of Shargar.

"I hear ye," returned Robert coolly, for he was too anxious about Ericson to be surprised at anything. "Haud yer tongue. I'll come to ye in a minute. What the deevil are ye efter noo?"

But Shargar had already withdrawn himself.

Ericson recovered a little once more, refused some whisky offered by the bookseller, rose, and went out.

"If I were only home!" he said. "But where home is I don't know."

"We'll try to mak' ane o' 't," said Robert. "Tak' a haud o' me. Lay yer weicht upo' me. Gin it warna for yer len'th, I cud cairry ye weel eneuch. Whaur is that Shargar?" he muttered to himself, looking up and down the gloomy street.

But no Shargar was to be seen, and Robert kept peering in vain into every dark court they crept slowly past, till at length he almost came to the conclusion that he was only "phantastical," and resolved to think no more about him.

When they had reached the hollow, and were crossing the canal-bridge by Mount Pleasant, Ericson's strength again failed him, and again he leaned upon the bridge. But he had not leaned long before Robert found that he had fainted dead away. In desperation he began to hoist the tall form upon his back, and had just all but succeeded, when he heard the quick step of a runner behind him and heard the words—



"Gie 'im to me, Robert; gie 'im to me. I can cairry 'im fine."

"Haud awa' wi' ye," said Robert; and again Shargar fell behind.

For a few hundred yards he trudged along manfully with Ericson on his back; but his strength, more from the awkwardness of his burden than its weight, soon gave way, and he stood still to breathe. Almost the same moment Shargar was by his side again.

"Noo, Robert," he said, pleadingly; and between them the burden was shifted to Shargar's back.

How they managed it they hardly knew themselves; but after many changes they at last succeeded in getting Ericson home, and up to his own room. He had revived several times, but gone off again. In one of his faints Robert undressed him and got him into bed.

This proceeding led to certain exposures of the state of Ericson's clothes. He had very little indeed to cover him. Robert could not help crying with misery at the sight. In all such matters he was well provided, and gladly would he have shared with Ericson, but there was no use in thinking of that. But he could with his own blankets make him warm in bed. This he did, left Shargar in charge, and sped back to the new town to Dr. Anderson. The doctor had his carriage out at once, and in spite of Robert's objections to enter the grand chariot in his wet clothes, he wrapped him in a plaid and brought him home with him.

While Robert was away, Ericson came to himself, and seeing Shargar sitting by his bedside, asked feebly, as he tried to sit up, "Where am I?"

"In yer ain bed, Mr. Ericson," answered Shargar.

"And who are you?" asked Ericson again, bewildered; for Shargar's pale face looked very strange under his crown of red hair.

"Ow! I'm naeboddy."

"You must be somebody, or else my brain's in a bad state," returned Ericson.

"Na, na, I'm naeboddy. Naething ava. Robert 'll be hame in ae meenit. —I'm Robert's tyke (*dog*)," said Shargar, with a sudden inspiration.

This answer seemed to satisfy Ericson, for he closed his eyes and lay still; nor did he speak again before Robert arrived with the doctor.

Poor food, scanty clothing, undue exertion in reaching the university, hard mental effort against weakness, and, as came out afterwards, disquietude of mind, all borne with an endless endurance that was unconscious of its own existence, had reduced Eric Ericson to his present condition. His strength had given way at last, and he was now lying in the low border wash of a dead sea of fever. Its approach may have accounted in part for his behaviour from the first of Robert's meeting him that evening, although what he said before he left the house was a natural outcome of his habitual modes of thinking and feeling.

The last of an ancient race of poor men, he was left desolate—without one relative except a second cousin, and without money, except the little he advanced him, hoping to be repaid when Eric had a profession. This cousin was in the herring trade, and every session sent by sea from Wick to Aberdeen a small barrel of his fish for Eric's use. One herring,



"ROBERT FALCONER."





with two or three potatoes, formed his dinner as long as the barrel lasted. This will give my reader a notion of how he lived. Yet no one carried his head more erect than Eric Ericson—not from pride, but from simplicity and inborn dignity; and there was not a man at the college during his curriculum more respected than he. An excellent classical scholar—as scholarship went in those days—he was almost the only man at the university who made his knowledge of Latin serve towards an acquaintance with the Romance languages; and his knowledge of Dante at least, with facilities for the study of whose writings the college library supplied him, was rare in those days. He had gained a small bursary, and gave lessons when he could.

But having no level channel for the outgoing of the waters of one of the tenderest hearts that ever lived, those waters had sought to break a passage upwards. Here his experience corresponded in a considerable degree to that of Robert; only Eric's more fastidious and more instructed nature bred a thousand difficulties which he would meet one by one, whereas Robert, less delicate and more robust, would break through all the oppositions of theological science falsely so called, and take the kingdom of heaven by force. But indeed the stones and rubbish of the fallen temple of theology had accumulated far more heavily over Robert's well of life than over that of Ericson, whose obstructions were those belonging to the globe of humanity itself, rather than those heaped upon it by the bungling of the masons of the temple.

When Dr. Anderson entered, Ericson opened his eyes wide and regarded him fixedly. The doctor approached, and taking his hand, with a few kind words, began to feel his pulse. Then first Ericson seemed to comprehend his visit.

"I can't allow it," he said, withdrawing his hand. "If I am so ill as to need a doctor, I must die in peace."

"What do you mean, my dear sir?" said Dr. Anderson, courteously. "There will be no occasion to put you to any pain."

"Sir," said Eric, "I have no money."

The doctor laughed.

"And I have more than I know how to make a good use of," he answered.

"But I prefer to be left alone," said Ericson, turning his face away.

"Now my dear fellow," said the doctor, with gentle decision, "that is very wrong. With what face can you offer a kindness, when your turn comes, if you won't accept one yourself?"

Ericson, after a moment's struggle, held out his wrist. The doctor questioned, prescribed, and after giving Robert some directions, and saying he would call in the morning, went away. He had heard all that Robert knew about Ericson on his way to visit him, and was greatly interested in his representation. As he returned he recalled the apparition of Shargar, and after some reflection connected him with Bodyfauld.

But now Robert was somewhat in the position of the old woman who "had so many children she didn't know what to do." Dr. Anderson ordered nourishment for Ericson, and here was Shargar upon his hands, and what was he to do? Shargar and he could share, to be sure, and exist; but for Ericson—

First, however, I must give Shargar's story, although my reader guessed it no doubt at once.

Not a word did Robert exchange with him till he had gone to the druggist's and got the medicine for Ericson, for which fortunately he was able to pay: he always paid for everything till he had no more money. After taking it, Ericson fell into a troubled sleep, and, leaving the two doors open, Robert joined Shargar in his own room. There he made up a good fire, and they sat and dried themselves.

"Noo, Shargar," he said, with something of his grandmother's hardness, "hoo cam' ye here?"

"Dinna speyk to me that gait, Robert, or I'll cut my throat," returned Shargar.

"Hoots! I maun ken a' aboot it," answered Robert, with much modified and partly convicted tone.

"Weel, I never said I wadna tell ye a' aboot it. The fac' 's this—an' I'm no up to the leein' as I used to be, Robert: I hae tried it ower an' ower, but a lee comes ouch ower my thrapple noo. Faith! I cud hae leed ance wi' onybody, barrin' the deil. I winna lee. I'm nae leein'. The fac' 's jist this: I cudna bide ahin' ye ony langer."

"But what, the muckle lang-tailed deevil! am I to do wi' ye?" returned Robert, in real perplexity, and pretended displeasure.

"Gie me something to ate, an' I'll tell ye what to do wi' me," answered Shargar.

"What am I to gie ye? Will I tell the woman to mak' a sup parritch?"

"Ay, ay! onything. I dinna care a scart what it is."

The order was given, and while the porridge was being prepared, Shargar told Robert his story—how he had dropped from the gable window to the ground the same night he had heard a rumour of apprenticeship to a tailor, and with three halfpence in his pocket had wandered and begged his way to Aberdeen, arriving with one halfpenny left.

"But what am I to do wi' ye?" said Robert once more, in as much perplexity as ever.

"Bide till I hae tellt ye, as I said I wad do," answered Shargar. "Dinna ye think I'm the haveless crater I used to be. *I hae been in Aberdeen three days!* Ay, an' I hae seen you ilka day in yer reid goon, an' richt braw it is. And luik ye here!"

Shargar put his hand in his pocket and pulled out about half-a-crown, chiefly in coppers, which he exposed with triumph on the table.

"Whaur got ye a' that siller, man?" asked Robert, surprised.

"Here and there, I kenna whaur; but I hae gien the worth o' 't for 't. Rinnin' here an' rinnin' there, carryin' boxes til an' frae the smacks, an' doin' a'thing whether they bade me or no. Yesterday mornin' I got thruppence by hingin' aboot the Royal afore the coches startit, an' luikin' a' up and doon the street till I saw somebody hine awa wi' a porkmanty. Till 'im I ran, an' he was an auld man, an' maist at the last gasp wi' the weicht o' 't. Sae he gae me 't to carry. An' wha duv ye think gae me a shillin' the verra first nicht? Wha but my brither Sandy?"

"Lord Rothie?"

"Ay, faith. I kent him weel eneuch, but little he kent me. There he was upo' Black Geordie. He's some auld noo."

"Yer brither?"

"Na. He's young eneuch yet for ony mischief; but Black Geordie. What on earth gars him gang stravaguin' about upo' that black beast. I doobt he's a kelpie, or a hell-horse, or something no canny o' that kin'; for faith! brither Sandy's no ower canny himsel', I'm thinkin'."

"Did ye ever see yer father, Shargar?"

"Na. Nor I dinna want to see 'im. I'm upo' my mither's side. But that's naething to the pint. Ye hae gart me learn to come to the pint wi' things. An' the pint's this. A' that I want o' you's to lat me come hame to ye at nicht, an' lie upo' the flure here. I sweir I'll lie i' the street gin ye dinna lat me. I'll sleep there as soun's Peter McInnes whan he's sittin' under Mr. McCleary. An' mair nor that, I winna ate muckle, though I confess I hae a dreidfu' poer o' aitin', an' a' 'at's ower I'll fess hame to you, an' ye can du wi' 't as ye like. Man, I cairriet a heap o' things the day for the skipper o' that boat 'at ye gaed intil wi' Maister Ericson the nicht. He's a fine chiel' that skipper!"

Robert was astonished at the change that had passed upon Shargar since he left him at Rothieden. The fact was that Robert's departure had cast him more upon his own resources, and allowed the individuality that had been repressed by every event of his history, even last and least by his worship of Robert, to develop itself a little. Miserable for a few weeks, he had begun to revive in the warmth of the fancy that to work hard at school would give him a little more chance of rejoining Robert some day or other. With the same feeling he had watched to please Mrs. Falconer, and had indeed begun to buy golden opinions from all sorts of people. He had a hope in prospect. But into the midst fell the whisper of the apprenticeship like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. He fled at once, and to Robert.

"Weel, ye can hae my bed the nicht," said Robert, "for I maun sit up wi' Mr. Ericson."

"Deed I'll do naething o' the kin'. I'll sleep upo' the flure, or else upo' the door-stane. Deil a bit o' me s' gang into your bed. Man, I'm no clean eneuch efter what I've come throu' sin' I drappit frae the window-sill i' the ga'le-room. But jist len' me yer plaid, an' I'll sleep upo' the rug here as gin I war i' Paradees. An' faith! sae I am, Robert. Besides, ye maun gang to yer bed sometime the nicht, or ye winna be fit for yer wark the morn. An' ye can jist gie me a kick, an' I'll be up to tak' yer place aside the gentleman."

Almost for the first time since their association had commenced, Robert gave in to Shargar.

The porridge arrived from below; they sat down each on one side of the fire; ate the porridge with the assistance of treacle; conversed all the while about old times—for the youngest life has its old times, its golden age—and old adventures,—Dooble Sanny, Betty, &c. &c. There were but two subjects which Robert avoided—Miss St. John and the Bonnie Leddy. When Shargar was at length deposited upon the little bit of hearthrug which adorned rather than

enriched the room, with Robert's plaid of shepherd-tartan around him, and an Ainsworth's dictionary under his head for a pillow, Robert felt happier than he had felt for many a day. For although he did feel a little anxious about Ericson, the pain of that anxiety was more than counterbalanced by the pleasure of feeling that he had him all in his own hands to minister unto.

"Man, I fin' mysel' jist like a muckle colley," said Shargar. "Whan I close my een, I could suppose 'at I was ance mair i' the inside o' yer auld luckie-daddie's kilt. But the Lord preserve me frae ever sic a fricht again as yer grannie an' Betty gae me the nicht they fand me. I dinna believe it's in natur' ever to hae sic a fricht twice in ane's life. Sae I'll fa' asleep at ance, an' nae mair but as muckle o' my prayers as I can min' upo' noo 'at grannie's no at my lug."

"Haud yer impidence, an' yer tongue thegither," said Robert. "Min' 'at my granny's been the best frien' 'at ye ever had."

"'Cep' my ain mither," returned Shargar, with a sleepy doggedness in his tone, and was soon fast asleep.

Ericson had been slumbering uneasily. Robert had gone from time to time to his bedside, but he had not awaked. As soon as Shargar was disposed of, Robert took his candle with him and sat down beside his older friend. But he soon found that he grew uneasy, and tossed more; and by the expression of his face, although his eyes remained closed, he guessed that the candle must be the cause of his unrest. And so it was; for the moment he put it out Ericson was more peaceful. So Robert sat in the dark.

But the rain was now over. Some upper wind had swept the clouds from the sky, and the whole world of stars was radiant over the earth and its griefs.

"O God, where art thou?" he said in his heart.

There was no curtain, and the blind had not been drawn down, therefore the earth looked in at the storm-window. The sea neither glimmered nor shone. It lay across the horizon like a low level cloud, out of which came a moaning. Was this moaning only of the earth, or was there trouble among the stars too? Robert was to learn that save in the secret place of the Most High, in the heart that is hid with the Son of Man in the bosom of the Father, there is trouble—a sacred unrest—everywhere—the moaning of a tide setting homewards, even towards the bosom of that Father.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A HUMAN PROVIDENCE.

It was well for Robert that he had not to attend any classes the next day. He had not allowed himself to sleep a wink throughout the night, and as the gray of the world's reviving consciousness melted in at the window, things around and within him looked somewhat ghastly. There is more of a harmony between the conditions of surrounding nature and the world within than any but those whose souls are tuned to nature-pitch are ready to believe. Anything liker the gray dawn than the soul of one who has been anxiously watching by a sick-bed all the long hours of the dark could be found nowhere,

except indeed it be the first glimmerings of the truth upon the mind that has been wandering in the darkness of a godless life.

Ericson had waked often, and Robert had administered his medicine carefully. But he had been mostly between sleeping and waking, and had murmured strange words, in which Robert could see only passing glimmers of meaning, but which glimmers roused the imagination of the boy with glimpses into regions hitherto unknown. As the light came in he found himself growing very sleepy, and he went to his own room to get a book, that he might try to read at the window. To his surprise Shargar was gone, and for a moment he doubted whether he had not been dreaming all that had passed between them the night before. His plaid was folded up and laid upon a chair, as if it had lain there all night, and his Ainsworth was on the table. But beside it was the money Shargar had drawn from his pockets.

About nine o'clock Dr. Anderson arrived, found Ericson not so much worse as he had expected, comforted Robert, and told him he must go to bed.

"But I can't leave Mr. Ericson," said Robert.

"Let your friend—what's his odd name?—watch him during the day."

"Shargar, you mean, sir. But that's his nickname. His real name they say his mither says, is George Moray—wi' an o an' no a ur. Do you see, sir?"

"No, I don't."

"They say he's a son o' the auld Markis's, that's it. His mither's a randy wife that gangs aboot the country—a gipsy they say. There's nae doobt aboot *her*. An' by a' accoonts the father's likly enuech."

"And how on earth did you come to have such a questionable companion?"

"Shargar's as fine a crater as ever God made," said Robert, warmly. "Ye'll alloo 'at God made him, doctor; though his father an' mither thoctna muckle aboot him or God either when they got him atween them. An' Shargar couldna help it. It micht ha' been you or me, for that maitter, doctor."

"I beg your pardon, Robert," said Dr. Anderson, keeping down the expression of the pleasure which the fervour of his young kinsman's defence of his friend afforded him; "but I only wanted to know how he came to be your companion."

"I beg your pardon, doctor—but ye seemed some scunnert at it; an' I canna bide Shargar to be luikit doon upo'. Luik here," he continued, going to his box, and bringing out Shargar's little heap of silver and coppers, "that's what he brocht hame last nicht, an' syne sleepit upo' the rug i' my room there. An' faith, we'll want a' 'at he can mak' an' me too afore we get Mr. Ericson up again. An' gin it warna for you, sir, whaur wad we be, the haill o' 's?"

"But ye haena tellt me yet," said the doctor, so pleased with the lad that he relapsed into the beloved dialect of his youth, "hoo ye cam' to forgather wi' 'im."

"Dinna ye min', doctor, 'at I tellt ye a' aboot that afore. It was a' my granny's doin', God bless her—for weel he may, an' muckle she needs 't. Gin she could only get my father hame!" added the boy with a sigh, as much for his grannie as for his father.



"What should she want him home for?" asked Dr. Anderson, still making conversation.

"I didna mean hame to Rothieden. Faith, I believe she cud bide never seein' 'im again, gin she only kent 'at he wasna i' the ill place. She has awfu' notions aboot burnin' ill sowls for ever an' ever. But it's no hersel'. It's the wyte o' the ministers. Doctor, I do believe she wad gang an' be brunt hersel' wi' a great thanksgivin', gin it wad lat ony puir crater oot o' 't—specially my father. An' I sair misdoobt whether mony o' them 'at pat it in her heid wad do as muckle. I'm some feared they're like Paul afore he was convertit. He wadna lift a stane himsel', but he likit weel to stan' oot by an' luik on."

Here a deep sigh, almost a groan, from the bed, reminded them that they were talking too much and too loud for a sick room.

"What's the good of all that, when you don't know whether there's a God or not?" murmured Ericson.

"'Deed that's verra true, Mr. Ericson," returned Robert. "I wish ye wad fin' oot an' tell me. I would be blithe to hear what ye had to say anent it—it was *ay*, ye ken."

Ericson began to murmur inaudibly.

"This won't do at all, Robert, my boy," said Dr. Anderson. "You must not talk about such things with him, or indeed about anything. You must keep him as quiet as ever you can."

"I thocht he was comin' till himsel'," returned Robert. "But I will tak' care, I assure ye, doctor. Only I'm feared I may fa' asleep the night, for I was dooms sleepy this mornin'."

"I will send Johnston as soon as I get home, and you must go to bed when he comes."

"'Deed, doctor, that winna do at a'. It wad be ower mony strange faces a'thegither. We'll get Mistress Fyvie 'to luik till 'im the day, an' Shargar canna work the morn, bein' Sunday. An' I'll gang to my bed for fear o' doin' waur, though deil a bit will I sleep i' the daylight."

Dr. Anderson was satisfied with this arrangement, and went home cogitating much. This boy, this cousin of his, was making a kind of vortex of good about him into which every one that came near it was drawn. And what was best, he seemed quite unaware that there was anything noteworthy in his behaviour. The good he did appeared to spring from an inward necessity almost, although no doubt there was in it enough of the salt of choice to keep it from losing its savour. But there was no conscious exercise of religion in it—for there his mind was all at sea. I do not doubt, however, that religion had much, perhaps I ought to say everything, to do with it. Robert did not think about God as a reason for being true to his fellows; but, if I am rightly setting forth the process by which God led him to be the man I knew him, how could even the first results of this leading, however imperfectly developed, be other than religion? They were true—they were the outcome of divine influences—they were the buds of the fruit that were to be gathered off the tree hereafter. God be praised by those who can regard religion as the truth of humanity—its own truth that sets it free—not binds, and lops, and mutilates it; who can regard God as the Father of every human soul—

the ideal Father, not an inventor of schemes or the upholder of a court etiquette, for whose use he has chosen to desecrate the name of *justice*.

But to return to Dr. Anderson. I have had little opportunity of knowing his Indian history. He returned, when half-way down the hill of life, to his country, sad, gentle, kind, and rich. Whence his sadness came we need not inquire. Some woman out in that fervid land may have darkened his story—darkened it wronglessly, it may be, with coldness or only with death. But to return home without wife to accompany him or child to meet him,—to sit by his riches like a man over a fire of straws in a Siberian frost; to feel that old faces were gone, and old hearts changed; that the pattern of things in the heavens had melted away from the face of the earth; that the chill evenings of autumn were settling down into longer and longer nights, and that no hope lay any more beyond the mountains that bounded the horizon of youthful vision—surely this was enough to make a gentle-minded man sad, even if the individual sorrows of his history had gathered into gold and purple in the west. I say *west* advisedly. For we are journeying, like our globe, ever towards the east. Death and the west are behind us—ever behind us, and settling into the unchangeable.

It is therefore no wonder that he should become more and more interested in the fine promise of Robert, in whom he saw revived the hopes of his own youth, but in a robuster and at the same time more ideal nature. Where the doctor was refined, Robert was strong; where the doctor was firm with a firmness he had learned, Robert was imperious with an imperiousness which time would mellow; where the doctor was generous and careful at once, Robert gave his mite and forgot it. He was rugged in the simplicity of his truthfulness, and his speech bewrayed him as altogether of the people; but the doctor cared not for that, for he knew the hole of the pit whence he had been himself digged. All that would fall away as the spiky shell from the polished chestnut, to be reabsorbed in the growth of the grand cone-flowering tree, till it stood up in the sun and wind of the years, a very altar of incense. It is no wonder, I repeat, that he learned to love the boy—indeed, had already begun to love him, and long to further all his plans. But he was too wise to overwhelm him with a cataract of fortune instead of blessing him with the merciful dew of the summer night.

"The fellow will bring me in for no end of expense," he said to himself, smiling, as he drove home in his chariot. "The less he means it the more unconscionable he will be. There's that Ericson—but that isn't worth thinking of. I must do something for that queer protégé of his, though—that Shargar. The fellow is as good as a dog, and that's saying not a little for him. I wonder if he can learn—or if he takes after his father the marquis, who never could spell. Well, it is a comfort to have something to do with my money worth doing. I did think of leaving it all for a hospital; but I'm not sure that it isn't better to endow a good man than a hospital. I'll think about it. I won't say anything about Shargar either, till I see whether he goes on as he has begun. I might give him a job though, now and then. But where to fall in with him prowling about after jobs?"

He threw himself back in his seat, and laughed with a delight he had

rarely felt at the thought of his own providence watching over the boys struggling and fighting along without expectation of more from him than the medical help he was giving Ericson. Might not there be a Providence that transcends the vision of men and orders their affairs, shaping to nobler ends the blocked-out designs of their rough-hewn marbles? His thoughts wandered back to the Brahmin who had been his friend, and who died longing for the absorption into deity which had been the dream of his life; and he wondered hopefully whether that Brahmin might not find the grand idea of his life-scheme carried out to yet finer issues than his aspiration had dared to contemplate—whether he might not find an absorption in the divine that would make his personality more intense in rendering his will pure and holy.

#### CHAPTER IX.

#### A HUMAN SOUL.

ERICSON lay ill for several weeks, during which time Robert and Shargar were his only nurses. They contrived, by each abridging both rest and labour, to give him constant attendance. Shargar went to bed early and got up very early, so as to let Robert have a few hours' sleep before his classes began. Robert also slept a little in the evening, after Shargar came home, and made up for the time by studying while he sat beside his patient. By the greatest economy of means, consisting of what Shargar brought in by jobbing about the quay and the coach-offices, and what Robert got from Dr. Anderson for copying his book for the printers, they contrived to procure for Ericson all that he wanted in the way of nourishment. The shopping of the two boys, in their utter ignorance of such delicacies as the doctor told them to get for him, the blunders they made as to the shops at which they were to be bought, and the consultations they held, especially about the preparing of the prescribed nutriment, afforded them many a merry laugh in after years. My reader may wonder why they did not call in the aid of Mrs. Fyvie, but the poor woman was so discomposed, her house being filled with lodgers, at the very idea of nursing, that Robert begged she would give herself no trouble about it. Her conscience, however, was exercised on the matter, and she spoke to Dr. Anderson. He assured her she might keep her mind easy, and so the ministering was abandoned to the boys. What cooking for the invalid they could not manage on their own fire, she did cheerfully, and behaved in the kindest manner about Shargar, refusing, as he gave her no trouble, but the contrary, to add anything to the rent of Robert's room.

Now Dr. Anderson was watching everything, and the two boys as much as his patient. He allowed them to work on, providing what was needful; only for the sake of the patient as well as of his caterers, he sent the wine that was necessary from his own cellar. The moment that the supplies should begin to fail, or the boys to look troubled, he was ready to interfere. About Robert's perseverance he had no doubt, but he wanted to try Shargar's faithfulness a little.

As soon as Robert had got things arranged to fit the new circumstances, he wrote to his grandmother to tell her that Shargar was with him, working



hard and doing the best he could. Her reply was somewhat cold and offended, but was enclosed in a parcel containing all Shargar's garments, and ended with the assurance that as long as they did well she would be ready to do what she could for them.

By way of parenthesis I make the following remark. Very few English readers will like Mrs. Falconer; but her grandchild constantly affirmed that he considered her one of the noblest women ever God made; and I, from his account, am of the same mind. Her care was fixed

To fill her odorous lamp with *deeds* of light,  
And hope that reaps not shame.

And if one must choose between the *how* and the *what*, let me have the *what*, come of the *how* what may. I know of a man so sensitive over his sister's griefs that he shuts his ears to any report of them, because it spoils his digestion.

One evening Robert was sitting by the table in Ericson's room, with his *Collectanea Majora* open before him. Dr. Anderson had not called that day, and he did not expect to see him now, for he had never come so late. He was quite at his ease, therefore, and busy with two things at once, when the doctor opened the door and walked in. I think it is just possible that he came up quietly with some design of surprising him. There he found him as I have said, with a stocking on one hand, as I have not said, and a darning needle in the other, sitting where Ericson could not see him. The doctor took no apparent notice of him, but walked up to the bedside, and Robert put away his work, thinking he had escaped. But after his interview with the sick man was over, the doctor signed to the nurse to follow him to the next room. There Shargar lay on the rug already snoring. It was a cold night in December, but he lay in his under-clothing alone, with a single blanket round him.

"Good training for a soldier," said the doctor; "and so was what I saw you at when I came in, Robert."

"Ay," answered Robert, colouring a little; "I was readin' a bit o' the *Anabasis*."

The doctor smiled a far-off sly smile.

"I think it was rather the *Katabasis*, if one might venture to judge from the direction of your labours, Robert."

"Weel," answered Robert, "what wad ye hae me do? Wad ye hae me lat Mr. Ericson gang wi' holes i' the heels o' 's hose, whan I ken I can mak' them a' snod, an' learn my Greek at the same time? Hoots, doctor! dinna lauch at me. I was doin' nae ill. A body may please themsel's—whiles surely, ohnsinned."

"But it's such waste of time! Why don't you buy him new ones?"

"Deed that's easier said than dune. I hae eneuch ado wi' my siller as 'tis; an' gin it warna for you, doctor, I *do* not ken what wad come o' 's; for ye see I hae no richt to come upo' my grannie for ither fowk. There wad be nae en' to that."

"But I could easily lend you the money to buy him some."

"An' whan wad I be able to pay ye, do ye think, doctor? I' the neist warl' maybe, whaur the currency may be sae different that there'll be no reckonin' o' the rate o' exchange. Na, na."

"But I will give you the money if you like."

"Na, na. Ye hae dune eneuch already, an' mony thanks. Siller's no sae easy come by to be wastit, as lang's a darn 'll do. Forby, gin ye began wi' *his* claes, ye wadna ken whaur to haud; for it wad jist be the new claiith upo the auld garment: ye micht as weel new cleed him at ance."

"And why not if I choose, Mr. Falconer?"

"Speir ye that at *him*, an' see what ye'll get—a luik 'at wad fess a corbie frae the lift. Fegs, I wadna hae ye try that. Some fowk's poverty maun be han'let jist like a sair place, doctor. He canna weel compleen o' a bit darnin'. He canna tak' that ill," repeated Robert, in a tone that showed he yet felt some anxiety on the subject; "but new anes! I wadna like to be by whan he fand that oot. Maybe he micht tak' them frae a wuman; but frae a man body, na, na; I maun jist darn awa'. But I'll mak' them dacent eneuch afore I hae dune wi' them. A fiddler has fingers."

The doctor smiled a pleased smile; but when he got into his carriage, again he laughed heartily.

The evening deepened into night. Robert thought Ericson was asleep. But he spoke.

"Who is that at the street door?" he said.

Robert had heard no footstep and no knock; for though everything was very still, they were at the top of the house, and there was no window to the street. But Ericson's senses were preternaturally acute, as is often the case in such illnesses.

"I didna hear onybody," answered Robert.

"There was somebody," returned Ericson.

From that moment he began to be restless, and was more feverish than usual throughout the night.

Up to this time he had spoken little, was depressed with a suffering on which he could put no name—not pain, he said—but such that he could rouse no mental effort to meet it: his endurance was altogether passive. From this time, however, his brain was more affected. He never raved, but often wandered; never spoke nonsense, but many words that would have seemed nonsense to ordinary people: to Robert they sounded like inspiration. His imagination, which was greater in Ericson than any other of his fine faculties, seemed to run away with him, so that he would talk in verse—probably verse that he had already written down and now recalled. He would even pray sometimes in measured lines, and go on murmuring petitions strange and wild till the words of the murmur became indistinguishable, and he fell asleep. But even in his sleep he would speak. And Robert would listen in awe; for the words themselves were such that, falling from the man whom he loved as infinitely superior to himself, they came to him as dim breaks of coloured light from the rainbow walls of the heavenly city.

"If God were *thinking* me," said Ericson, "it would be all right. But if he were only *dreaming* me, I should go mad."

Robert listened with keenest ear. A mist of great meaning hung about the words his friend had spoken. He might speak more. For some minutes he listened in vain, and was turning at last towards his book in hopelessness, when Ericson spoke again, and Robert's ear soon detected the rhythmic motion of his speech.

Come in the glory of thine excellence,  
Rive the dense gloom with wedges of clear light,  
And let the shimmer of thy chariot wheels  
Burn through the cracks of night. So slowly, Lord,  
To lift myself to thee with hands of toil,  
Climbing the slippery cliff of unheard prayer!  
Lift up a hand among my idle days,  
One beckoning finger. I will cast aside  
The clogs of earthly circumstance, and run  
Up the broad highways where the countless worlds  
Sit ripening in the summer of thy love.

As Robert listened, breathless, for fear of losing a word, he remembered that he had seen something like these words in the papers Ericson had given him to read on the night when his illness began. When his friend had fallen asleep, he searched and found the poem from which I give the following extracts. He had not looked at the papers since that night, he had been so anxious and occupied.

#### A PRAYER.

O Lord, my God, how long  
Shall my poor heart pant for a boundless joy?  
How long, O mighty Spirit, shall I hear  
The murmur of Truth's crystal waters slide  
From the deep caverns of their endless being,  
But my lips taste not, and the grosser air  
Choke each pure inspiration of thy will?

I would be a wind,  
Whose smallest atom is a viewless wing,  
All busy with the pulsing life that throbs  
To do thy bidding; yea, or the meanest thing  
That has relation to a changeless truth,  
Could I but be instinct with thee—each thought  
The lightning of a pure intelligence,  
And every act as the loud thunder-clap  
Of currents warring for a vacuum.

Lord, clothe me with thy truth as with a robe,  
Purge me with sorrow. I will bend my head,  
And let the nations of thy waves pass over,  
Bathing me in thy consecrated strength.  
And let thy many-voiced and silver winds  
Pass through my frame with their clear influence.

I have seen  
Unholy shapes lop off my shining thoughts,  
Which I had thought nursed in thine emerald light;  
And they have lent me leathern wings of fear,

Of baffled pride and harrowing distrust;  
 And Godhead with its crown of many stars,  
 Its pinnacles of flaming holiness,  
 And voice of leaves in the green summer-time,  
 Has seemed the shadowed image of a self.  
 Then my soul blackened; and I rose to find  
 And grasp my doom, and cleave the arching deeps  
 Of desolation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Make me a broad strong river coming down  
 With shouts from its high hills, whose rocky hearts  
 Throb forth the joy of their stability  
 In watery pulses from their inmost deeps,  
 And I shall be a vein upon thy world,  
 Circling perpetual from the parent deep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lo! now I see  
 Thy trembling starlight sit among my pines,  
 And thy young moon slide down my arching boughs.  
 With a soft sound of restless eloquence.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hear me, O Lord,  
 When the black night draws down upon my soul,  
 And voices of temptation darken down  
 The misty wind, slamming thy starry doors,  
 With bitter jests. "Thou fool!" they seem to say;  
 "Thou hast no seed of goodness in thee; all  
 Thy nature hath been stung right through and through.  
 Thy sin hath blasted thee, and made thee old.  
 Thou hadst a will, but thou hast killed it—dead—  
 And with the fulsome garniture of life  
 Built out the loathsome corpse."

\* \* \* \* \*

Lord, hast thou sent  
 Thy moons to mock us with perpetual hope?  
 Lighted within our breasts the love of love,  
 To make us ripen for despair, my God?  
 O, dost thou hold each individual soul  
 Strung clear upon thy flaming rods of purpose?  
 Or does thine inextinguishable will  
 Stand on the steep of night with lifted hand,  
 Filling the yawning wells of monstrous space  
 With mixing thought—drinking up single life  
 As in a cup? and from the rending folds  
 Of glimmering purpose, do all thy navied stars  
 Slide through the gloom with mystic melody,  
 Like wishes on a brow? Oh, is my soul,  
 Hung like a dew-drop in thy grassy ways,  
 Drawn up again into the rack of change,  
 Even through the lustre which created it?  
 O, Mighty One, thou wilt not smite me through  
 With scorching wrath, because my spirit stands  
 Bewildered in thy circling mysteries.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lord, thy strange mysteries come thickening down  
 Upon my head like snow-flakes, shutting out

The happy upper fields with chilly vapour.  
 Shall I content my soul with a weak sense  
 Of safety? or feed my ravenous hunger with  
 Sore-purged hopes, that are not hopes, but fears  
 Clad in white raiment?

There was a great deal more of it, nor have I chosen all the best. Full of faults, I have given so much of it to my reader, just as it stood upon Ericson's blotted papers, the utterance of a true soul "crying for the light." I have not given more lest I should weary him with verse where he looks for prose. One only poem more, in this chapter, by way of contrast, to show another mood of the lovely nature, when one of the clouds of holy doubt and questioning love which had darkened over him did

Turn forth her silver lining on the night.

#### SONG.

They are blind, and they are dead :  
 We will wake them as we go ;  
 There are words have not been said,  
 There are sounds they do not know.  
 We will pipe and we will sing—  
 With the music and the spring,  
 Set their hearts a-wondering.

They are tired of what is old :  
 We will give it voices new ;  
 For the half hath not been told  
 Of the Beautiful and True.  
 Drowsy eyelids shut and sleeping,  
 Heavy eyes oppressed with weeping,  
 Flashes through the lashes leaping.

Ye that have a pleasant voice,  
 Hither come without delay ;  
 Ye will never have a choice  
 Like to that ye have to-day.  
 Round the wide world we will go,  
 Singing through the frost and snow,  
 Till the daisies are in blow.

Ye that cannot pipe or sing,  
 Ye must also come with speed ;  
 Ye must come and with you bring  
 Weighty word and weightier deed :  
 Helping hands and loving eyes,  
 These will make them truly wise—  
 Then will be our Paradise.

As Robert read this, the sweetness of the verse seized upon him, and, almost unconsciously, he read the last stanza aloud. When he looked up from the paper with a sigh of wonder and delight, there was the pale face of Ericson gazing at him from the bed. He had risen on one arm, and looked like a dead man called to life against his will, and finding the world he had left already stranger to him than the one into which he had but peeped.

"Yes," he murmured ; "I could say that once. It's all gone now. Our world is but our moods."

He fell back on his pillow. Robert thought, but could only say he thought, he heard the words follow—

"If *she* were to look at me once as she looked that night, I should believe it all again—fool myself with faith again. So it is better not. I would not be fooled. To believe the false and be happy is the very belly of misery. To believe the true and be miserable, is to be true—and miserable. If there is no God, let me know it. I will not be fooled. I will not believe in a God that does not exist. Better be miserable because I *am*, and cannot help it.—O God!"

Yet in his misery, he cried upon God.

It may seem strange that I should say Robert could not be sure that he had ever heard these words. But they came upon him with such a shock of sympathy, that they destroyed his consciousness for the moment, and when he *thought* about them, he doubted if he had heard them. I do not doubt that he heard them. He rose and approached the bed. Ericson lay with his eyes closed, and his face drawn as by inward pain. Robert put a spoonful of wine to his lips. He opened his eyes, gazed at the boy as if he did not know him, closed them again, and lay still.

Some people take comfort from the true eyes of a dog—and a precious thing to the loving heart is the love of even a dumb animal. What comfort then might not such a boy as Robert be to such a man as Ericson? Watchful as he was, Robert did not know that often and often Ericson lay still in his shadowy bed, not asleep, as he thought, but watching the face of his watcher. When the human soul is not yet able to receive the vision of the God-Man, God sometimes—might I not say always?—reveals himself, or at least gives himself, in the presence of some human being whose face, whose hands are the ministering angels of his unacknowledged presence, and who thus keeps alive the fire of love on the altar of the heart, until God hath provided the sacrifice—that is when the soul is strong enough to offer it. Here were these two, thinking each that God had forsaken him, or at least fearing that he would not condescend to be found by him, and each to the other the very love of God, sent by him to tend each other's heart. In each of them he was present to the other. Robert thought himself the happiest of mortals in being permitted to wait upon such a big brother as Mr. Ericson, the least smile from whom was joy enough for one day, and night too. Ericson wondered at the unconscious goodness of Robert, and while he gazed at his ruddy-brown face, believed in God. For some time after he was taken ill, he was too depressed and miserable to care much about anything. He lay passive, and did not even think to ask how he was cared for. But by slow degrees it dawned upon him that he was tended by the two boys, and that in Robert especially, a heart deep and gracious, like that of a woman, watched over him. He was uncouth sometimes, but his uncouthness was that of a half-fledged angel. The heart of the man and that of the boy were drawn fast together. Before he was well enough to think about the means of their ministration, he loved Robert at least well enough to feel no too heavy burden in being indebted to him for so much; and he would lie pondering how he would return his kindness.



But he saw to his relief that the boy's work was not neglected, for he left him regularly to attend his classes.

How much Robert's desire to appear well in the eyes of Miss St. John contributed to this regularity, enabling him to attend to two somewhat conflicting duties at once, I can only imagine; but certainly his ministrations to Ericson did not materially interfere with his progress in Latin and Greek. Nay, I venture to think that they aided his progress by steadying him; for a little difficulty almost always adds to result; just as the ramming of the powder sends the bullet the further. I have heard, indeed, that when a carrier wants to help his horse up hill, he sets a boy on his back. This gives him a hold with his feet; and so do difficulties of other kinds in the struggle up other hills.

Ericson made very little direct acknowledgment to Robert for what he did. His tones, his gestures, his looks, all thanked him; but he longed to put his thanks in deeds, and shrunk from words, with the maidenly shamefacedness that generally belongs to true feeling. He would even sometimes assume the authoritative with the boy, and try to send him away to his studies from some ministration to himself. But then Robert was sure to hold his own. In fact, the relation of elder and younger brothers was already established between them. And Shargar took his share in the labour of love and the fellowship; and if he could not enter into the deeper feelings of the others, yet he looked on from afar, and worshipped in that he believed.

## CHAPTER X.

### A FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE presence of which Ericson had been aware at the street-door, on a past evening, was that of Mr. Lindsay, walking home with bowed back and bowed head from the college library, where he was privileged to sit after hours as long as he pleased over books too big to be comfortably carried home to his cottage on the road to the new town. He called on his way to inquire after Mr. Ericson, whose acquaintance he had made in the library during his second year at the college, and with whom he had been so much pleased that he invited him to go and see him. Having once called, Ericson soon repeated his visit, until before long, on almost any Friday evening, he might have been found, if anybody had wanted him, seated by the parlour-fire of Mr. Lindsay's cottage.

"Well, my dear, I've been to ask for Mr. Ericson," said Mr. Lindsay, as he entered the parlour that evening, to a young girl who rose from a stool by the fire to meet him. There was a faint rosy flush on her cheek, not for Ericson, but for the hero of the volume she still held in her hand as she approached her father. They did not kiss: that was not the custom in Scotland then, and a kiss in consequence meant more than it does now. There is a considerable depreciation in that currency as well as in others now-a-days.

"And how is he?" asked the girl.

"Very poorly indeed," answered Mr. Lindsay.

"I am sorry. Ye'll miss him, papa."

"Tell Jenny to bring my lamp, my dear."

"Won't ye have your tea first, papa?"

"Oh yes, if it's ready."

"The kettle's been boiling for a long time, but I wouldn't make the tea till you came in."

Mr. Lindsay was an hour at least later than usual, but Mysie did not seem to be aware of that; she had been absorbed in her book—reading it by the fire—too much absorbed even to ring for better light. Her father went to put off his long bifurcated greatcoat, and Mysie returned to her seat by the fire, and forgot to make the tea. It was a warm, snug room, not very small, full of dark, old-fashioned, spider-legged furniture. It was low-pitched, with a bay-window, open like an ear to the cries of the German Ocean at night, and like an eye during the day to look out over its wide blue-gray expanse—generally at this season troubled in its mind, like a child in a wet day with nothing particular to do. This ear or eye of the room was now, however, curtained with dark crimson; and the room, in the firelight with the young girl for a soul to it, affected one like an ancient book in which he reads his own latest thought of the morning. But my reader would prefer hearing what the girl was like to being told about the room in which she sat. And in this the requirements of my biography permit me to gratify him. I only request in return that when I bring Robert into this room, with this girl in it, he will use both his memory and his imagination to represent to himself the impression made upon Robert's mind.

She was nothing over the middle height—if such a phrase be of any use for description—delicately fashioned, at once slender and round, with extremities neat as buds. Her face was very pale, with a fair paleness, except when such a flush, as of a white rose, overspread it, which, however, followed upon the least breath of emotion—not with the whiteness of deficient health, or a bloodless nature. Her cheek was curved lovelily, and her face looked rather short than otherwise—rather within the right length of the long axis of the oval. But at first one could see nothing for her eyes. They were the largest eyes you ever saw, and their motion reminded you, as Ericson once said to Robert, of those of Sordello in the Purgatorio,

*E nel muover degli occhi onesta e tarda.*

They seemed too large to move otherwise than with a slow turning like the heavens upon their unseen axis. At first one would have thought them black, but if he ventured to look into them, which was as dangerous as looking from the battlements of Elsinore, he found that they were a not very dark brown. In her pale face, however, especially when it was flushed as I have represented it, they had all the effect of what Milton describes in his fourth sonnet as

*Quel sereno fulgor d'amabil nero.*

I am the more anxious that the present should be in some measure a real introduction of Miss Lindsay, because at this time Robert was incapable of reading her countenance other than instinctively, and it is well sometimes that the spectator should know a little more than the actor. I shall therefore go on a little further.



When the eyes had a little recovered from hers, they would naturally rest on the mouth, the most living in some respects of all the features of any face. And a wise man would have been a little troubled, discomposed, in regarding her mouth. There was the sadness of a morbid sensibility about it, a sensibility which belonged to an imagination wrought upon by self-consciousness, and excited by the reading of everything in the shape of a novel that came in her way. Her lips were neither thin nor compressed—they closed lightly, and were rather rich in their curves; but there was a flickering tremulousness, not visible *in esse*, but somehow very visible *in posse*, about the upper lip that gave sign of feelings not only ready to be moved, but ready to be so moved as might cause the whole fabric of her nature to rock dangerously.

It would appear that she had not entirely forgotten the tea, but had yielded to the temptation of her book with some consciousness of duty urging her all the time to something else; for the moment her father re-entered, she started from her stool on the rug, and went to a side table for the tea-caddy. The same moment Jenny entered with candles.

If Mr. Lindsay saw that Mysie had neglected to make the tea, he took no notice of it, but drew a chair to the table, helped himself to a piece of oat-cake, and proceeded to load it hastily with as much butter as it could well carry. Mysie was very quick now, and for the time lost the expression of *far-off-ness* which had hitherto characterized her countenance. When the tea was ready she sat down opposite to her father, who was eating his oat-cake and reading a book at the same moment, and having poured it out, was presently engrossed once more in her novel, which, unlike novel readers in general, she was reading as slowly and carefully as if it had been the Good News, to the forgetfulness of tea, toast, father, everything, and everybody. Her father was equally absorbed with a book to his mind, for he was tracing out some genealogical thread, of the end of which he fancied he had got a hold.

Mr. Lindsay was a mild, gentle man, whose face and hair seemed to have grown gray together. He was very tall, and stooped much. He had a clear, sweet, faithful blue eye, and a mouth of much sensibility. His eyes, however, rarely revealed themselves—they were so constantly bent downwards, either on the road, as he walked, or on his book, as he sat. He had been educated for the church, but had never risen above the position of a parish schoolmaster. He had never even been licensed. He loved to read, and had little or no impulse to utterance, was shy, genial, and, save in reading, indolent. Ten years before the present date of my history he had been taken up by an active lawyer in Edinburgh, from information accidentally supplied by Mr. Lindsay himself, as the next heir to a property to which claim was laid by a county family of wealth. Probabilities were altogether in his favour, when he gave up the contest upon the offer of a comfortable annuity from the disputants. To leave his schooling and his possible estate together, and sit down comfortably by his own fireside, with the means of buying books, and within reach of a good old library—that of King's College by preference—was to him the sum of all that was desirable. The income offered him was such that he had no fear of laying aside—

enough to provide for his only child, Mysie, at his death; but both he and she were so ill-fitted for saving, he from looking into the past, she from looking into—what shall I call it? I can only think of negatives—what was neither past, present, nor future, neither material nor eternal, neither imaginative in any true sense, nor actual in any sense, that up to the present hour there was nothing in the bank, and only the money for impending needs in the house. He could not properly be said to be a man of learning, though he was a great bookworm; for his reading lay all in the nebulous regions of history. Old family records, wherever he could lay hold upon them, were his favourite dishes; old, musty books that looked as if they knew something everybody else had forgotten made his eyes gleam and his white taper-fingered hand tremble with eagerness. With such a book in his grasp something seemed ever before him, beckoning him on, a dimly precious discovery, a wonderful fact that would fit into the mosaic of one of his pictures of the past—though, to tell the truth, his discoveries seldom rounded themselves into pictures. Only with extensive reading of this sort many fragments of the minutely dissected map would find their places; and he rejoiced like a mild giant refreshed with soda-water when he found the sides of the fragments fall together harmoniously. But I have already said more about him than his place justifies; therefore, although I could gladly linger over the portrait, I will leave it. He had taught his daughter next to nothing. Being his child, he had the vague feeling that she inherited all his wisdom, and that what he knew she knew. So she sat reading novels, trashy or other, as the case might happen, while he knew no more of what was passing in her mind than of what the Admirable Crichton might, at the moment, be disputing about with the angels.

But I would not have my reader suppose for a single instant that Mysie's mind was corrupted. It was so simple and childlike, leaned to what was pure, and looked up to what was noble with such an unquestioning faith, that what was directly bad in any of the books she happened—for it was all haphazard—to read, glided over her as a black cloud may glide over a landscape, leaving it sunny as before.

I cannot therefore say, however, that she was nothing the worse. If the darkening of the sun keeps the fruits of the earth from growing, the earth is surely the worse, though it be blackened by no deposit of smoke. And where good things do not grow, the wild and possibly noxious will grow more freely. There may be no harm in the yellow tanzie—there is much beauty in the red poppy; but if they be eaten for food some ill will be the result. And it is only by eating good food that we come to know thoroughly what is good for food. Such nourishment as Mysie was now taking, if opium, hemp, and hemlock can be called nourishment, would at least result in this—not that she would call evil good and good evil, but that she would take the beautiful for the true and the outer shows of goodness for goodness itself—not the worst fate, but bad enough, and involving an awful amount of suffering and possible defilement. He who thus thinks to climb the hill of happiness will find himself floundering in the blackest bog that lies at the foot of its precipices. I say *he*, not *she*, advisedly. All will acknowledge it of the

woman: it is as true of the man, though he may get out of it easier. Will he? I say, checking myself. I doubt it much. In the world's eye, yes; but in God's? Let the question remain unanswered.

When he had eaten his toast, and drunk his tea, apparently without any enjoyment in either, a present embodiment of Dante's meaning, when he says—

Quando per diletinanze, ovver per doglie,  
Che alcuna virtù nostra comprenda,  
L'anima bene ad essa si raccoglie  
Par ch'a nulla potenza più intenda,

Mr. Lindsay rose with his book in his hand, and withdrew to his study, leaving his daughter buried in hers.

He had not long left the room when Mysie was startled by a rather loud knock, a sound rarely heard in the cottage, at the back door, which opened on a lane, leading across the top of the hill behind all those houses. But she had almost forgotten it again, when the door of the room opened, and a gentleman entered, unannounced; for that was the primitive usage there. When she saw him, Mysie started from her seat, and stood in visible embarrassment. The colour went and came on her lovely face, and her eyelids grew very heavy. She had never seen the visitor before. Whether he had ever seen her before, or whether this was purely a visit to her father, I cannot certainly say. He did not leave her to find her own way out of her confusion, but advanced with perfect composure, taking all the blame of whatever awkwardness might be in their meeting upon himself. He was a man no longer young, but in the full strength and show of manhood—the Baron of Rothie. Since the time at which I first described him to my readers, he had grown a black moustache, which improved his countenance greatly, by partially concealing his upper lip with its boar-tusk curves. Such a man would make an impression on a girl like Mysie, with the kind of *cultivation* her imaginative faculty had been receiving for so long, and scarcely the smallest opportunity of comparing its fancies with reality, far deeper and more instant than the handsomest youth in the country. She felt herself trembling in his presence.

"I beg your pardon, Miss—Lindsay, I presume?—for intruding upon you so abruptly. I expected to see your father—not one of the graces."

She blushed all the colour of her blood now. Her book fell. He lifted it and laid it on the table. She stood trembling, and did not speak. Poor Mysie was scarcely more than sixteen.

"May I wait here till your father is informed of my visit?" he asked, taking his place near where she had been sitting. Her only answer was to drop again upon her low stool. The fact was that the baron was like enough to the hero of whom she had just been reading for her imagination to jumble the two ideas inextricably, and hence in part her confusion. But Jenny had left it to Mysie to acquaint her father with the fact of the baron's presence; and before she thought of the necessity of taking some step or other in the matter, he had succeeded in drawing her into conversation, for he was able to talk about anything, religion alone excepted. He was no hypocrite, he

enough to provide for his only child, Mysie, at his death; but both he and she were so ill-fitted, for saving, he from looking into the past, she from looking into—what shall I call it? I can only think of negatives—what was neither past, present, nor future, neither material nor eternal, neither imaginative in any true sense, nor actual in any sense, that up to the present hour there was nothing in the bank, and only the money for impending needs in the house. He could not properly be said to be a man of learning, though he was a great bookworm; for his reading lay all in the nebulous regions of history. Old family records, wherever he could lay hold upon them, were his favourite dishes; old, musty books that looked as if they knew something everybody else had forgotten made his eyes gleam and his white taper-fingered hand tremble with eagerness. With such a book in his grasp something seemed ever before him, beckoning him on, a dimly precious discovery, a wonderful fact that would fit into the mosaic of one of his pictures of the past—though, to tell the truth, his discoveries seldom rounded themselves into pictures. Only with extensive reading of this sort many fragments of the minutely dissected map would find their places; and he rejoiced like a mild giant refreshed with soda-water when he found the sides of the fragments fall together harmoniously. But I have already said more about him than his place justifies; therefore, although I could gladly linger over the portrait, I will leave it. He had taught his daughter next to nothing. Being his child, he had the vague feeling that she inherited all his wisdom, and that what he knew she knew. So she sat reading novels, trashy or other, as the case might happen, while he knew no more of what was passing in her mind than of what the Admirable Crichton might, at the moment, be disputing about with the angels.

But I would not have my reader suppose for a single instant that Mysie's mind was corrupted. It was so simple and childlike, leant to what was pure, and looked up to what was noble with such an unquestioning faith, that what was directly bad in any of the books she happened—for it was all haphazard—to read, glided over her as a black cloud may glide over a landscape, leaving it sunny as before.

I cannot therefore say, however, that she was nothing the worse. If the darkening of the sun keeps the fruits of the earth from growing, the earth is surely the worse, though it be blackened by no deposit of smoke. And where good things do not grow, the wild and possibly noxious will grow more freely. There may be no harm in the yellow tanzie—there is much beauty in the red poppy; but if they be eaten for food some ill will be the result. And it is only by eating good food that we come to know thoroughly what is good for food. Such nourishment as Mysie was now taking, if opium, hemp, and hemlock can be called nourishment, would at least result in this—not that she would call evil good and good evil, but that she would take the beautiful for the true and the outer shows of goodness for goodness itself—not the worst fate, but bad enough, and involving an awful amount of suffering and possible defilement. He who thus thinks to climb the hill of happiness will find himself floundering in the blackest bog that lies at the foot of its precipices. I say *he*, not *she*, advisedly. All will acknowledge it of the

woman: it is as true of the man, though he may get out of it easier. Will he? I say, checking myself. I doubt it much. In the world's eye, yes; but in God's? Let the question remain unanswered.

When he had eaten his toast, and drunk his tea, apparently without any enjoyment in either, a present embodiment of Dante's meaning, when he says—

Quando per dilettanze, ovver per doglie,  
Che alcuna virtù nostra comprenda,  
L'anima bene ad essa si raccoglie  
Par ch'a nulla potenza più intenda,

Mr. Lindsay rose with his book in his hand, and withdrew to his study, leaving his daughter buried in hers.

He had not long left the room when Mysie was startled by a rather loud knock, a sound rarely heard in the cottage, at the back door, which opened on a lane, leading across the top of the hill behind all those houses. But she had almost forgotten it again, when the door of the room opened, and a gentleman entered, unannounced; for that was the primitive usage there. When she saw him, Mysie started from her seat, and stood in visible embarrassment. The colour went and came on her lovely face, and her eyelids grew very heavy. She had never seen the visitor before. Whether he had ever seen her before, or whether this was purely a visit to her father, I cannot certainly say. He did not leave her to find her own way out of her confusion, but advanced with perfect composure, taking all the blame of whatever awkwardness might be in their meeting upon himself. He was a man no longer young, but in the full strength and show of manhood—the Baron of Rothie. Since the time at which I first described him to my readers, he had grown a black moustache, which improved his countenance greatly, by partially concealing his upper lip with its boar-tusk curves. Such a man would make an impression on a girl like Mysie, with the kind of *cultivation* her imaginative faculty had been receiving for so long, and scarcely the smallest opportunity of comparing its fancies with reality, far deeper and more instant than the handsomest youth in the country. She felt herself trembling in his presence.

"I beg your pardon, Miss—Lindsay, I presume?—for intruding upon you so abruptly. I expected to see your father—not one of the graces."

She blushed all the colour of her blood now. Her book fell. He lifted it and laid it on the table. She stood trembling, and did not speak. Poor Mysie was scarcely more than sixteen.

"May I wait here till your father is informed of my visit?" he asked, taking his place near where she had been sitting. Her only answer was to drop again upon her low stool. The fact was that the baron was like enough to the hero of whom she had just been reading for her imagination to jumble the two ideas inextricably, and hence in part her confusion. But Jenny had left it to Mysie to acquaint her father with the fact of the baron's presence; and before she thought of the necessity of taking some step or other in the matter, he had succeeded in drawing her into conversation, for he was able to talk about anything, religion alone excepted. He was no hypocrite, he



said, and thought this as good as charity, covering a multitude of sins. Yet he was as great a hypocrite as ever walked the earth; for he made women believe in him, and the falser he knew himself, the more honour he judged it to persuade them of his truth.

It is far from essential to my history to record the slight, graceful, marrowless talk into which he drew Mysie, and by which he both bewildered and bewitched her. It is, as my reader may have guessed already, her relation to Ericson that chiefly brings her into it, certainly not her relation to the baron.

She rose at length, taught by her inborn divinity, to go to her father and see why he did not come. As she passed him, the baron took her hand and kissed it. Why should a lovely creature like that tremble again when such a man as the baron touched her? She might well tremble, but not as she trembled. Even such a contact with a man like him was terrible—because there was no love in it. When a woman touched the sense of wonder and beauty God had given him that he might honour and worship, he neither honoured nor worshipped, but tore in pieces and devoured, that he might possess, as he thought. The poison of asps was under those lips; it was like a kiss from the grave's mouth, for his throat was an open sepulchre. This was all in the past time, reader. Baron Rothie was a foam-flake of the court of the Prince Regent. There are no such men now-a-days. They are mostly content with lower game now. And a man may break a woman's heart so long as she is not a lady. Or if virtue be already in the dust, where is the harm in building her sepulchre—in piling stone upon stone of the tumulus that keeps her there?

O Lord Christ! Evermore be thou praised for thy loving-kindness to the outcasts of society—men and women. Such may, after all, stand up in thy kingdom, when the laws of ladies and gentlemen shall have vanished in the risen glory of the true and the beautiful.

Before Lord Rothie had parted with Mr. Lindsay, he had interested him deeply in a trifling question of genealogy, which he promised to pursue for him, hoping that his lordship would call within a fortnight, by which time he expected to have some result of his researches to communicate.

One of Mr. Lindsay's weaknesses, cause and result both of his favourite pursuits, was an altogether excessive reverence for rank. Had its claims been founded, not merely on the divine fiat, but on mediated revelation, he could not have honoured it more. Hence when he communicated to his daughter the name and family of their visitor, it was "with bated breath and whispering humbleness," which of course deepened greatly the impression made upon her by the presence and conversation of the baron. But I will now turn to my friends, having laid a foundation of acquaintance with Miss Lindsay and her conditions sufficient for the making of that part of my history which rests upon her and her circumstances hereafter intelligible.

Shargar was late that evening, for he had a job that detained him. When he came in, he said, as he gave his money to Robert:

"I saw Black Geordie the nicht again, stan'in' at a back door, and Jock Mitchell, upo' Reid Rorie, haudin' him."

"Wha's Jock Mitchell?" asked Robert.

"My brither Sandy's ill-faured groom," answered Shargar. "Whatever mischief Sandy's up till, Jock comes in i' the heid or tail o' 't."

"I wonder what he's up till noo."

"Faith! nae guid. But I aye like waur to meet him by himsel' upo' that reekit deevil o' his. Man, it's awfu' whan Black Geordie turns the white o' 's ee, an' the white o' 's teeth upo' ye. It's a' the white 'at there is aboot 'im."

"Wasna yer brither i' the army, Shargar?"

"Ow, 'deed ay. They tell me he was at Watterloo. He's a cornel, or something like that."

"Wha tellt ye a' that?"

"I hae heard my mither speyk aboot sic things, whiles," answered Shargar; and with this the conversation dropped, for he was already in, or rather on his bed, and talking sleepily.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ANOTHER PEEP INTO ERICSON.

ERICSON was slowly recovering. He could now sit up in bed the greater part of the day, and talked about getting out of it soon. But as yet he had not strength. He was able, however, to give Robert an occasional help with his Greek, and to listen with pleasure to his violin. The night-watching grew less needful, and Ericson would have dispensed with it willingly, but Robert would not yet consent.

But Ericson had seasons of great depression, during which he could not endure the violin, and still less the words of the New Testament, a chapter of which Robert had once begun to read to him, in the faint hope that he might be able to draw some comfort out of it.

"Shut that book," he said. "If it were the word of God to men, it would have brought its own proof with it."

"Are ye sure it hasna?" asked Robert.

"No," answered Ericson. "But why should a fellow like me that would give my life—that's not much, but it's all I've got—to believe in God, not be able to do so? Only I confess the God set forth in the New Testament wouldn't satisfy me. There is no help. I must just die, and go and see. And then she'll be left without one that loves her. But what does it matter? She would not mind a word I said to her. And that God they talk about will just let her take her own way. He always does."

He seemed to have forgotten that Robert heard him when he spoke these words. He had closed his eyes, but he now opened them, and fixed them upon him with an expression that seemed to ask, "What have I said? Have I revealed anything?"

Robert knelt down by the bedside, and said, slowly, and with strongly repressed emotion,

"Mr. Ericson, I sweir by God, gin there be ane, that gin ye dee, I'll tak up what ye lea' ahin' ye. Gin there be onybody ye want luikit efter, I'll luik

after her, and do what I can for her to the best o' my abeility, sae help me God—aye savin' what I maun do for my ain father, gin he be in life, to bring him back to the richt gait, gin I hae fun' oot by that time 'at there is a richt gait to fess him back till. Sae ye can think about whether there's ony thing ye wad like to lippen till me."

A something began to grow in Ericson's eyes as Robert spoke. Before he had finished, they beamed on the boy.

"I think there must be a God somewhere, and a good one, after all," he said. "Shall I tell you why I think so at this moment, Robert?—It is because I should be so sorry that you should not believe in him, though I cannot. Now if the thing were false, why should I desire it so, even for your sake? How did I come to want it, if it never was, and was nowhere at my making? If a God has nothing to do with my existence, why should I feel that nothing but God can set existence right for me—such a God as I could imagine—altogether, absolutely true and good and loving? If we came out of nothing, we could not invent the idea of a God—could we, Robert? If we came from God, on the contrary, nothing is more natural, nothing so natural, as that we should want him, and when we think we haven't got him, try to find him. What if he should be in us after all, and working in us this way?"

"That's the grandest thing that's come to me for mony a day, Mr. Ericson," cried Robert, in exultation. "Dinna say 'at ye dinna believe in God, Mr. Ericson. Ye *duv* believe in 'im—mair, I'm thinkin', nor onybody 'at I ken, 'cep', maybe, my grannie—only hers is a some queer kin' o' a God to believe in, an' I dinna think I cud ever manage 't mysel'."

Ericson gave a sigh, and was silent for some moments. Robert remained kneeling by his bedside, happier, it seemed to him, clearer-headed, and more hopeful than he had ever been in his life before. What if it was all right at the heart of things, right even as a man, if he could understand it all, would say was right; and right so that a man who could not understand, could yet believe it to be ten times more right than he could understand! Vaguely, dimly, joyfully, Robert saw something like this in the possibility of things, and his heart was full, and the tears filled his eyes. But Ericson spoke again.

"I have felt like that often in my life, for a few moments," he said; "and then something would always come and blow it away, and leave me drying up in an east wind. I remember particularly one spring morning, sweet as a promise of love— But if you will bring me that bundle of papers, the withered leaves of my past, I will show you something, if I can find it, that will let you understand what I felt that day, far better than I can describe it to you now."

Robert rose from his knees, went to the cupboard, the only place of deposit except an old hair-trunk that Ericson had, and brought thence the thick pile of loose leaves, scribbled over in every direction. Ericson turned them over, and now and then sorted them a little, which Robert was glad to see, as it seemed to indicate that he had not yet ceased to care for them quite—clung yet a little to his past, and, therefore, hoped yet a little for his future.



Then he stopped at the following, carelessly written, carelessly corrected, and hard to read.

"It is not finished, nor likely to be," said Ericson, as he put the paper into Robert's hand.

"Wouldn't you read it to me yourself, Mr. Ericson?" asked Robert.

"I would sooner put it in the fire," answered he. "Only that is its fate, anyhow. I don't know why I haven't burnt them all long ago—rubbish, and diseased rubbish! Read yourself, or leave it."

Robert took it eagerly, and read. The following was the best he could make of it:

Oh that a wind would call  
From the depths of the leafless wood!  
Oh that a voice would fall  
On the ear of my solitude!  
Far away is the sea,  
With its sound and its spirit-tone,  
Over it white clouds flee,  
But I am alone, alone.

Straight and steady and tall  
The trees stand on their feet;  
Fast by the old stone wall,  
The moss grows green and sweet;  
But my heart is full of fears,  
For the sun shines far away;  
And they look in my face through tears,  
And the light of a dying day.

My heart was glad last night,  
As I pressed it with my palm;  
Its throb was airy and light  
As it sang some spirit-psalm;  
But it died away in my breast  
As I wandered forth to-day—  
As a bird sat dead on its nest,  
While others sang on the spray.

O weary heart of mine,  
Is there ever a truth for thee?  
Will ever a sun outshine  
But the sun that shines on me?  
Away, away through the air  
The clouds and the leaves are blown;  
And my heart hath need of prayer,  
For it sitteth alone, alone.

And Robert looked with sad reverence at Ericson, and never thought that, in the face of the fact, and in recognition of it, there was one who had dared to say, "Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father." The sparrow does fall—but he who sees it is yet the Father. And we know only the fall, and not the sparrow.

## VIEWS.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

THIS is an age of abolition. Our neighbours have abolished slavery, passports, and the balance of power; we seem to have abolished loyalty, enthusiasm, and responsibility; if somebody would only abolish views!

I don't mean photographs, though I hope I have suffered as much as most men from my friends' taste in this respect; nor yet those delights of our youth, dissolving views, which never would dissolve, but persisted in leaving a church on the top of a tree, and a cow in the arms of a watchman.

The views I do mean would probably have been called principles before the word became obsolete; they constitute a sort of framework of opinions, into which a man fits himself, as into a portable stocks, to the great detriment of his gait and general demeanour.

Roughly taken, they may be classed as three: art views, moral views, and emotional views.

## I.

Snapshaw, Moony, and I were at a picture-gallery the other day, when we stopped before a modern painting, divine in its subject and little less than divine in its treatment. I was foolish enough to say so; Snapshaw came down upon me at once.

"Do you like that?"

"Yes," I answered, pugnaciously.

"Ah, you are pre-Raphaelite."

"What's that?"

"Red hair, you know, and that sort of thing."

"I don't think so," I replied, diffidently. Really, it is hard to remember, at a minute's notice, what colour one's hair is.

Snapshaw went on with an ostentation of candour pointing out what he called the fine bits in the picture, reducing it to a mere agglomeration of art tricks, till I perforce exploded with "Don't believe the artist had one of those notions in his head; he just painted what he saw—in a vision."

"Ah, you are Ruskinite," he answered, tranquilly, rather gratified than otherwise by my exasperation. Snapshaw's rare moments of urbanity come when he has succeeded in putting somebody else in a rage.

"What is Ruskinite?" I asked Moony.

"A kind of indiarubber slate, I believe," he replied; and it was not till next day I discovered that he had understood me to say Bostonite—some thing that is being advertized just now.

"Sentiment is an old flaw in Foozy," pursued Snapshaw, evenly.

"You are all flawed all over like my landlady's cracked teapot," broke in Moony. "The picture is simply and entirely a beautiful picture. Why should not a man be allowed to enjoy it without being supposed to hold, or not to hold, a set of opinions that he knows nothing about? One half of you swear by schools, and the other half by individuals. Landseer's lions, for

instance, are becoming quite an article of faith, held, like some of the Romish dogmas, with a tenacity in inverse proportion to their reason. One is told that one cannot appreciate Landseer if one does not like his lions; yet why should a preliminary swallowing of those huge mouthfuls of bronze be necessary to one's enjoyment of the exquisite 'Piper and pair of nut-crackers?' It is much the same as in another set I know: you cannot laugh with a rollicking novelist without going in for an unlimited hanging of black reformers."

Nobody answered; but Moony is used to buzzing away to himself like a contented bumble bee. He is not a bad fellow, Moony, except at a concert. I had him at one the other night, and he dissertated on Schumann while we were listening to Beethoven through an entire concerto, till I am afraid I swore at him—repented, of course, directly; but was very glad I did it, as it reduced him to an indignant contemplation of his neighbour's back hair, the best possible state for a talkative man at a concert.

## II.

I feel fully qualified to discuss moral views, because I don't mind confessing to a choice circle like the readers of the *Argosy* that I did once go to a May meeting at Exeter Hall.

It had something to do with children. A thousand or two of them stood up on the platform and howled, and then a solitary figure, which seemed of portentous height, arose and moaned. It was an articulate moaning, but we lost the words, as, addressing the children, he turned his back upon us; which was kind of him. If the condition of his face at all matched that of his voice, it would have been too much for grown-up sensibilities. Children like horrors, witness the undying popularity of Blue Beard; a child who shrinks from that sensation story is contemned by his companions as a weak Walpole of an infant.

By the way (very much by the way), why should even that fair target, a Home Secretary, have been bespattered for the whole term of his existence because he did once receive a deputation of reformers with civility? That I have discovered by close observation to have been our late secretary's original and front offending, to which all criminal decisions and such like are mere addenda.

Literary moral views are queer altogether. The *Honest Review*, for instance, has gone perfectly rabid on the subject of authors' signatures; it would appear as if the editor was one of those lost spirits of the House of Commons, whose sole chance of distinguishing themselves is to start up and interrupt a speaker with a frantic cry of "Name, name!"

Of course, it is highly desirable, especially for an anonymous reviewer, to know how far it is safe to pitch into a book; but how the merit of a work can be affected by the fact that it is by John Smith, or the Dowager Countess of Soapshire, is an insoluble riddle.

## III.

Emotional views I approach with fear and trembling. They belong almost exclusively to the angelic half of humanity, and that is, in the emphatic language of the day, too much for me.

It has long been the fashion to praise the feminine mind for its perceptive qualities, the quickness with which it can leap to a conclusion; but there are some leaps, say those of a grasshopper, which, if they happen to come close to one, are rather too startling. The feminine intellect can decide at once that a man is a good painter because he is fond of children, or not a good novelist unless he can produce a certificate that he has never quarrelled with his wife. If he has no wife, that is worse: "What can he know of the human heart?"

There is one universal test applied by this Vehmgericht. Is a man nice, or not nice?

By profound research, I have been able to evolve a study of a nice man.

In the first place, he must earn a superfluously large income, and never have anything to do, beyond going about to see things. He must be keen and strong, and always suavely smiling; an eminent thinker, so that all his female relatives may be distinguished by being connected with him; but with all his faculties at leisure to turn over music, open doors, and decide questions of china and carved ivory.

He must have a fine sense of the feminine beauty hidden in his own immediate circle, but must never have the most distant perception that any other woman is decent-looking.

Lastly, his internal organization must be specially constructed with a view to his subsisting entirely on cakes and ices. Angels, of course, never have any digestions; but I have the best possible reason for knowing that an angelic life for a man is apt to result in heartburn and frequent hiccough. I tried it once, in the hope of propitiating Miss Theodosia Scratch, commonly called the Rev. Theodosia,—tried it till I found that I was rapidly refining myself away to the invisible; gave it up then, and she married a spiritualist, who, report says, beats her.

Still, the views of the Rev. Theodosia hang a shining goal before my dusty soul.

---

## A PASTORAL.

(*Leighton's Picture in the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1867.*)

THERE, where our fingers meet,  
That is the true note, sweet;  
Lean your head so on my breast  
For the full deep tone;  
Let the white on the brown hand rest,  
Fairest, mine own.

Folded in rose-leaf mouth,  
Honey secure from drouth—  
Blessed are these among reeds,  
By the flower-breath fed;  
Jealous Pan, from his place of weeds,  
Thrusts forth his head.

No, she is mine, summer air!  
Lift not the tresses so fair,  
Stir not her soul from its sleep,

Let the tune dream on—  
In the time when we wake to weep,  
All will be gone.

S.

## THE HERMIT OF GAUTING.

TO the German word *Sonderling* there is no exact English equivalent.

A *Sonderling* is a person eccentric in a supreme degree—eccentric, not from affectation, but from spontaneous and irresistible impulse. Some men are eccentric from vanity; some from a morbid tendency; some from false shame; some from the eager desire to avoid eccentricity: the *Sonderling* is a *Sonderling* because he cannot help it. There may often be very little to interest in the *Sonderling*. His peculiarities may not even be worth a moment's curiosity. Certain oddities of manner, of habit, of taste, or of attire may excite a smile, but are more likely to repel than to attract. In the *Sonderling* there must be an individuality so marked as to reveal some of the deeper elements of human nature, or to respond thereto, if he is to command our earnest attention. For it is ever in reference to the whole that a part can merit study.

As every Englishman is supposed to be a humorist, as every humorist is more or less a *Sonderling*, and as thus the English may be called a nation of *Sonderlings*, it is plain that *Sonderlings* of conspicuous, of colossal singularity must abound more in England than in any other country. But England has not a monopoly of the article; and the *Sonderling* is not an exceedingly rare animal in the region to which the word *Sonderling* belongs.

On the left bank of the Rhine lies the Duchy of Jülich, whose geographical attributes, and the vicissitudes of whose history it is not needful at present to picture. Enough if we say that the duchy now forms a portion of the Prussian monarchy.

At the seat of his ancestors, Broich, in the Duchy of Jülich, was born, on the 8th of September, 1768, Karl Theodor Maria Hubert, Freiherr von Hallberg-Broich. He and a younger brother were the only children of their parents. In his eighth year Charles was sent to the Gymnasium of Cologne as a pupil. Here he remained three years, and then, for military instruction, he entered the French School of Cadets at Metz. When he was fifteen his father bought for him a lieutenant's commission from the Elector of Bavaria, to whom the Duchy of Jülich then belonged; but his military studies at Metz were not interrupted. Having attained the rank of captain, he, in his twenty-second year, withdrew from the army, his father having, meanwhile, died. Hereupon the young Freiherr spent several years, as a traveller, in Switzerland and Italy; and, as a medical student, at Oxford, Paris, Vienna, and Heidelberg. In the military hospitals of Paris and Vienna he took his share of active professional duty. We next find him in America, and almost immediately afterwards in Scotland. Perhaps believing that every Stuart is a descendant of the Scottish kings, he was about to marry, in Scotland, a lady of that name; but she fell ill, and the poor maiden died in his arms. Forthwith our odd fellow of a baron returned home, and led for some time a retired life, occupying himself with agriculture and arboriculture, with politics

and history. These earnest pursuits, however, were varied by the queer-nesses for which he had from an early period been notorious. His own castle, Broich, and the towns of Jülich, Düsseldorf, and Cologne were by turns the scenes of his drolleries. As if to have the suitable livery of an original, he wore a ragged velvet coat, and put sealing-wax on the holes and rents.

He had roamed much, but the love of roaming was inextinguishable in his heart. Again, therefore, seizing the pilgrim's staff, he visited England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, penetrating as far as North Cape. A residence in St. Petersburg was followed by rambles in Ingria, Livonia, Esthonia, Courland, Lithuania, Poland, the Prussian States, Galicia, Podolia, Hungary, Transylvania, and the Danubian principalities. In Constantinople having found for a season a resting place, he forsook that great city to explore Asia Minor, Syria, Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece, and Sicily. Sailing from Sicily, he landed on the coast of Tunis. He now lounged along the coasts of the Mediterranean, renewing more than once his acquaintance with Greece. His steps he next turned to the land of romance, Spain, where his brother was in the military service. In seeking anew his home on the Rhineland, it was not for purposes of peace. The peasantry of the Jülich, Cleves, and Berg Duchies he strove to rouse into insurrection against the French; and with the zeal of a patriot, and the promptitude of a man of action, he hastened to Vienna, to gain the approval of the military authorities there for a grand popular upheaval. But the military authorities at Vienna were pedantic, and pedantic up to this hour they have not ceased to be. Disgusted with the slaves of routine, Baron Hallberg hurried back to the Rhineland, and having, perhaps, nothing else to do for the moment, he married a young lady of fifteen, the granddaughter of the Count von Efferen. The felicity of his married life was swiftly and rudely disturbed. One night French soldiers broke into his castle and took him prisoner. Accused of being connected with a disguised band of robbers, whose special objects of dislike and assault had been the officers in the French civil service, he was conveyed to Paris, and kept in captivity for eight months. His deliverance he owed to his mother, and to his young and heroic wife. This noble creature threw herself with passionate tears at the feet of the Empress Josephine, and did not plead in vain. Scarcely had his friends congratulated him on the recovery of his freedom, when the prefect of Mentz put an eager clutch on him, pretending that he had escaped from prison. But despatches arrived proclaiming Hallberg's complete innocence. Our bold baron challenged the prefect, who, however, did not deem a duel compatible with his official dignity.

The Freiherr Hallberg had not been associated with a disguised band of robbers in opposition to the French power, but he ceased not to be the determined enemy of that power in franker fashions. After his abortive attempt at duelling, we encounter the baron at Naples, distributing money to the Lazzaroni, to kindle them into fury against the French—the foes of Italy and of Germany. With his usual fondness for change of scene, he darted across the Mediterranean to Tunis. He gave in Tunis full play to his Antigallican phrensy, urging the ruler of this vassal state to raise troops for



an onslaught on France, and, by a sublime mystification, promising him the kingdom of Italy as a reward. Hallberg's schemes must have seemed more amusing than dangerous to the French government, which, however, ordered the baron to leave Tunis without delay. He took ship for Europe, but fell into the hands of the English, who, suspecting him to be a French spy, took him to London. When, after a detention of six months, Hallberg was released, he received for his travelling expenses six hundred carolins on departing for Germany.

The celebrated Prussian minister, Stein, gave, in 1813, the commission to Hallberg to organise, militarily, the whole region between the Meuse and the Rhine,—that is to say, to arm and discipline the peasantry,—and on the baron was conferred the somewhat imposing title of "Feldobersthauptmann." Hallberg brought together two hundred and fifty battalions. The men were animated by the best spirit, and would have fought, if Napoleon, in his declining fortunes, had been able to offer a more determined resistance. Loving-hearted, lofty-souled Caroline, the baron's wife, put on male attire, and acted as his adjutant. Other important duties were allotted to Hallberg, such as fortifying Cologne and superintending the commissariat of the Russian troops. For his zeal, and energy, and diligence, the Bavarian Order of St. Michael was bestowed on this strange mortal, who, if he had not been a Sonderling, might really have done something great. When the Allies entered Paris in 1815, Hallberg was eminently useful in connection with the general police. Of the Prussian Order of St. Anne, instituted in 1735, there are four classes. It is distributed with a ludicrous profusion. With this Order, of the second class, Hallberg was, in 1816, decorated. The Prussian Red Eagle Order of the third class Hallberg refused, saying that it had been often lavished on the officers of the French civil service in the Rhine province. But the genuine reason for the rejection is averred to have been, that Hallberg, in his exorbitant vanity, was disappointed that he had not been made Duke of Berg. The refusal of the Prussian Order brought for Hallberg another order of an entirely different kind, namely, that for his apprehension—so very small-minded was the Prussian king. In natural anger and disgust, Hallberg turned his back on the Prussian territory, and sought the protection of the Bavarian monarch, which was readily conceded. Bavaria was from that hour his home, if home he, with his vagabond impulses and habits, could be said to have. By a work entitled *The Political Cookery Book*, which Hallberg had prepared and published, in conjunction with his brother, the Prussian king was keenly offended, and, with a petty spitefulness, would gladly have crushed Hallberg, forgetful of the eccentric man's patriotic devotedness and sacrifices.

Accompanied by his wife, Hallberg, in 1817, visited a second time Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. According to his own account, the nobles of Stockholm urged him to overthrow and drive away Bernadotte, and assert his own claim to the Swedish throne. That claim had a somewhat shadowy foundation—the sister of Hallberg's grandmother was related by marriage to the royal house of Vasa. For the execution of the scheme, Hallberg asked the nobles to raise an army of thirty thousand men. While, unless the

whole thing was a mere joke, he was abandoning himself to a seductive but preposterous delusion, he was placed under the guardianship of the police. Finally he was expelled from Sweden, the uncontrollable laughter of Bernadotte doubtless mocking the German Sonderling's retreating steps.

An enterprise of a less chimerical description next engaged him. He bought, in Upper Bavaria, at Gauting, three German leagues from Munich, the estate of Fussberg, for agricultural improvements and experiments. The peasants of the neighbourhood called him, on account of his long beard, "The Hermit;" and he himself took, in his literary labours, the name of "The Hermit of Gauting," by which he became gradually and widely known. But hermit he by no means was; for, besides his occupations as a landowner, he assembled at Fussberg artists and learned men of every kind; and as a contributor to periodicals and otherwise, he was in active contact with the literary world.

The wanderer's mania stirred his blood anew in 1821, when he went to Italy, whence, in 1822, he returned as a "citizen of Rome." In this same year he rambled on foot through the Bavarian territory appertaining to the River Isar, and in the years 1823 to 1825 he travelled in Holland.

To honorary citizenship the Bavarian towns Aibach and Freising admitted Hallberg, and this proved the prelude to an honorary recompense which he must have valued much more. The Pope named him and his son Knights of the Golden Spur, and Counts Palatine of the Holy Lateran.

About the year 1824, Hallberg presented to the King of Bavaria a plan for draining and cultivating a large moorland tract, lying below Munich. The king not merely approved the plan, but made Hallberg a gift of the principal part of the tract, besides advancing him considerable sums for the promotion of the undertaking. In the very heart of the tract was a considerable forest, and on the border of the forest a hunting-seat, the former abode of the prince-bishops of Freising, when indulging their taste for shooting snipes, or for hawking. At this hunting-seat, called Birkenneck, Hallberg with his whole family settled in the spring of 1826, and went vigorously to work to reclaim the waste, and to colonize it. Roads were made, houses—in the Brabant style—were built, a mill was erected, and—that none of the signs and ministries of civilization might be wanting—an inn arose to cheer and comfort the wayfarer. When, in October, 1830, King Louis of Bavaria visited what might still with too much truth be named the infant colony, he ordered the erection, from his own funds, of a school, a church, and a parsonage. Spite of the king's patronage, the prosperity of the settlement was not rapid or remarkable. The settlement had to face many obstacles, and much opposition, partly from the very nature of the experiment, and partly from the oddities and perversities of Baron Hallberg.

Thoroughly disenchanted, and saying, in a half-misanthropic mood, that he had finished his labour, the baron sold all his fixed property in Bavaria, and, with a shirt in his pocket, resumed his old and favourite business of scampering hither and thither through the world. His advent in the Tyrol excited what is elegantly designated a sensation. Hallberg's venerable appearance, and his long white beard, recalled to the Tyrolese their beloved

Andrew Hofer, who wore a long beard—not white, it is true, but red, when with his faithful followers he drove the French across the Brenner. As soon as it became known that Hallberg had likewise been one of Germany's deliverers, there was no end to the enthusiasm. Crossing the Brenner, and continuing his journey, Hallberg was taken for some great personage or another—among others, for the exiled Swedish king, Gustavus IV.

In September, 1832, the Frieher lost his wife, Caroline, who was still in the prime of life. Her death was caused by an injury she had received nine months before, when leaping from one of the windows on the ground floor of the house at Birkeneck. Much her sweetness, benevolence, and nobleness caused her to be lamented. Lonely and joyless enough would her marriage have been but for the birth of a daughter and a son.

The daughter, Fräulein Amelie, was born in 1813, and died in 1842. She was twice married. Her first husband she divorced: her second husband survived her. Most pleasant was her countenance: her hair was long and beautiful, though in colour tending towards that which has been popular and unpopular by turns—red. She was an accomplished horsewoman, bold even to temerity. At a people's festival she rode thrice round the Munich race-course, and was the first to reach the goal.

Her brother, Hermann Siegburg, was born in 1814. When baptized, he was, by his father's command, carried to church in military dress. The natural sciences were those to which he chiefly applied himself. He resembled his mother far more than his father, both as to talent and temper. A fall from his horse brought the amiable and excellent Hermann, in 1851, to his grave.

Thus Hallberg's wife, his daughter, his son, had all died young, death, in the case both of the mother and the son, having shown an eagerness for his prey. It does not seem that Hallberg was much bowed down by these successive bereavements.

After repeating, in 1835, his visit to the Tyrol, Hallberg published, in the spring of 1836, a prayer-book, for the use of his colony at "Hallbergmoos," as, by command of the Bavarian king, it had been named: whereupon the Pope decorated him with the Order of Saint Gregory. Some of the people maintained that he had received this honour because he had helped to terminate the squabbles between the Prussian government and the archbishop of Cologne: some, because he had gained for the missionaries in Egypt unrestricted freedom to preach: and others, because he had prevented the destruction of the monastic establishments at Ispahan. There seemed to be a general persuasion that a man so singular must possess mysterious and mighty power.

From 1836 to 1838, Hallberg the indefatigable travelled in the East, returning by way of Sicily. During this long pilgrimage he visited Egypt, where Mehemed Ali received him with the courtesy of an Oriental, and with the respect due from one man of rank to another. The dislike to Europeans, and especially to the English, of her whom the Syrians called the Queen of Tadmor, the Enchantress of Dschihum, the Sibyl of Lebanon, Lady Esther Stanhope, is well known. But when, in winter, Hallberg drew near to her

abode on the famous Syrian mountain, she gave him, with the instinctive regard of Sonderling for Sonderling, most hospitable entertainment. At Constantinople the baron married the daughter of an Armenian merchant. But three months after the marriage the lady, whose name was Galanta, died of the plague.

Stung by the gadfly of unrest, our wandering Jew of a German crossed, in 1839, the Channel, to see how England and Scotland were getting on. He proclaimed, in a curious manner, that the light of his countenance again shone on the fatherland: he advertised in the newspapers for a wife. Fifty beautiful maidens were immediately rivals for the hand of the more than septuagenarian Hermit of Gauting. At a ball in Augsburg the loveliest women crowded round him, as if to dispute with each other the possession of the celebrated traveller, though doubtless curiosity, and a liking for fun, had more to do with the matter than any deeper feeling.

His last, and, all the circumstances considered, truly memorable journey, Hallberg began in 1842, at the age of seventy-four. Making Lower Franconia his starting point, he traversed Baden, Würtemberg, and the Prussian Rhine Province, revisiting his old home. After a tour in Belgium and Holland, he went to Munich, and then travelled over the Upper Palatinate. Thence he crossed Bohemia to Vienna, explored Moravia, Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia, Esthonia, and halted at St. Petersburg. He then successively touched at Moscow, Nijni Novgorod, Kasan, Simbirsck, Pensa, Sarator, Astrachan, and Tiflis. At Baku, on the Caspian Sea, he sojourned ere passing through Georgia and Armenia to Persia, where his travels extended beyond Schiraz. At Teheran he presented and represented himself to the Schah Mohammed as the ambassador of the kingdom of Bavaria, whose ruler had sent through him a cordial salutation to Persia's monarch, with the offer of an offensive and defensive alliance. He boasted extravagantly of Bavaria, and said that its frontiers could scarcely be reached in a march of a hundred days. The Schah was so completely mystified as to present the baron with the insignia of the Order of the Sun and the Order of the Lion. While the fees were equal to six hundred Rhenish florins, the value of the Decorations was equal to ten thousand Rhenish florins, so that Hallberg had not played the Münchhausen for nothing. The one Decoration is a star, richly adorned with brilliants, and worn on the left breast: the other is a golden starlike medal, hanging on the left side by a long riband.

When, after this immense journey, Hallberg entered Munich, in 1844, he was greatly exhausted, and though he had seen much and enjoyed much, he had lost the sight of one eye. He tried to reinvigorate himself by strict diet, and by the use of effervescing powders.

In a certain sense the travels of Baron Hallberg were ended. But so insatiable was the roving propensity in him, that he determined to see the eternal city before he died. He went to Rome therefore in 1847, and in 1848 he received from the hands of the Pope, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

The old man of eighty felt as if it were really time to seek a fixed abode. He was tempted by the charming scenery round, to build for himself a

hermitage at Berchtesgaden, near Bartholomew's Lake, in Upper Bavaria. Then he dreamed of settling in America; and, while busy with his scheme, he put an advertisement in the newspapers respecting it. The self-banishment to America having been abandoned, and scores of spots suitable for residence having been surveyed, Hallberg, in December, 1850, purchased the old half-ruined Castle of Hörmannsdorf, on the road from Straubing to Landshut. At Castle Hörmannsdorf he was compelled to remain, for he was now totally blind.

His brother Francis had died in the course of the year 1850, at Wiesbaden, aged seventy-nine. Francis was more than a valiant soldier; he could speak fluently most of the modern languages, and attained some renown as an author.

The years—nearly a dozen—which Hallberg spent at Hörmannsdorf were to him like an eternity. In a life full of movement and variety, he had learned neither philosophical nor pious resignation. The loss of his sight made his existence a burden and a misery to him. Hundreds of Black Forest clocks, ticking, whirring, and striking; and multitudes of singing-birds surrounded him, as if noise, harsh or sweet, were to be a compensation to him for want of movement. But nothing could mitigate his great anguish, gladden his great weariness. Old age too, in bringing its usual sufferings, did not bring its usual alleviations. The mind of Hallberg did not sink into childish forgetfulness or childish weakness. It remained strong, and bold, and clear, and the internal light, in defying the external darkness, felt the darkness only the more keenly. One day exactly resembled the day preceding, gave him the sun's warmth, but grudged him the sun's still diviner blessing. Every evening the old man, deploring instead of feeling grateful for his youthful vigour of soul, and his marvellous memory, murmured the melancholy passage of Valerius Maximus: "With a slow step the divine wrath proceeds to its own vindication, and atones, by the heaviness, for the tardiness of punishment." His companions were two Tyrolese maidens, one of whom did the house work, while the other read to him, and a gardener, who acted likewise as cook. What a meagre and monotonous existence had that man, whose eager and adventurous foot had sought every quarter of the globe!

Deliverance came, as in mercy it ever comes. Death, on the 17th April, 1862, broke the bonds of him who seemed as if he could never die. On the 19th April his mortal remains were interred in the churchyard of the village of Weng. Some small pieces of cannon he had made a present of to the commune of Weng were fired at the grave. Along with some mourners from Straubing, a military deputation from Landshut took part in the last honours paid to the departed.

By his will, dated 2nd January, 1862, Hallberg appointed the members of his household his heirs, and for greater security he published the will, before his death, in a Bavarian newspaper. The terms in which his generosity and gratitude are expressed do as much honour to Hallberg as the gratitude and generosity themselves. After naming the persons who were to be the recipients of his bounty, he proceeds: "These my good friends have resided with me for many years, and have shown me so much attention, kindness, and



devotedness, that I have adopted them into my family as my children. I declare, therefore, that, from thankfulness, I wish to recompense them. As it is now my intention to make my testament, and to get my last will written, I have named them my heirs," and so on, in accordance with the customary formula.

About twenty years or so before his death Hallberg was still a vigorous man. He was of middle height, well formed, extremely thin. The head was very small, the brow lofty, light grey hair was scattered sparingly on the back part of the head, and on the temples; the top part of the head had a hard struggle to conceal its baldness. A nose nobly formed, and slightly aquiline, harmonized well with a small and finely-cut mouth. Hallberg's small blue-grey eyes threw a glance at once keen and furtive. The lean, angular face, marked by a cold, ungenial expression, had a yellow tint, or more properly, a dirty-white tint, to which innumerable freckles gave a kind of disagreeable variety. Combats, and cares, and sorrows, had left traces of themselves in deep furrows and many wrinkles. The scar of a sabre wound passed from the brow across the nose to the pale thin lips. Once red, the long beard was now grey, and flowed down the breast in a fashion a painter would have admired. The baron's deportment had a military directness and majesty; the step was firm, and, apart from the long beard, and the studied simplicity of attire, the baron's appearance would have been striking. He always wore a short old German coat of woollen cloth, or velvet, or beaver, a cotton shawl as a girdle, short breeches, long riding or top boots, and a velvet cap. Black was his favourite colour, because black set off to immense advantage the decorations which were inseparable from the coat.

Hallberg's voice was loud and singularly unmodulated and unmelodious. He spoke slowly, clumsily, and with excessive prolixity, but with a certain picturesque frankness and boldness. His style corresponded with his peculiarities; and his handwriting, large and sprawling, as if he had used a sword instead of a pen, had a sort of schoolboyish incorrectness. In intercourse he was sometimes frigid and taciturn, especially with strangers, sometimes warm and talkative. His demeanour manifested dignity, pride, bonhomie, refinement, harshness, condescension, all according to circumstances. In his own house he was usually cold, ceremonious, moody. Suspicion, vanity, avarice, were the fundamental defects of his character. Spite of humane principles and benevolent impulses, he was an aristocrat, without a lofty opinion of the world and of men, exacting and valuing servility toward himself. Few could boast of close, confiding, persistent relations with him. Toward women, exceedingly gallant, he appreciated in them nothing but youth and beauty. Though he was a voluminous writer, yet he was not a learned man, and could be considered only as a species of literary dilettante. With Latin and Hebrew he was acquainted, and with the chief living languages. He possessed an extraordinary treasure of practical knowledge, which he had gained in the course of his long and adventurous life. As has already been observed, his astonishing memory was undimmed and unweakened to the last. The older he grew the more intolerant he became, being, in reference to contemporary persons and things, a merciless fault-finder. His motto was, "Every region



is, to the brave man, a fatherland." It was meant to show that he regarded himself as a citizen of the world. Yet he was a sound German at heart.

The principal literary productions of Baron Hallberg are the accounts of his travels. They are admitted to contain much that is instructive and interesting, along with not a little that is fantastical, or even preposterous. Perhaps, without being consciously mendacious, he, by mingling or heightening all the colours, often conveyed a false impression. In his numerous contributions to periodicals there was a blending of the useful, the entertaining, and the whimsical. He counselled the readers of one of his works to have a good supply of scented waters at hand, if their nerves were weak. This was not very witty, and probably it was not intended to be witty; it was the man's fashion of speech. Hallberg left several manuscripts, including memoirs.

Over our *Sonderling*, and over *Sonderlings* in general, we moralize not, but leave each man to moralize thereon, if he deems it wise and profitable. The world needs individuality in every age, eminently needs it in our own, when the tendency of things, and the efforts of Utilitarians and Materialists, pull down the mountains to make one universal plain, and when clever people find fault with the sky for being too far off, and for not being tangible enough. The *Sonderling* is an imperfect but often effectual vindication of individuality, that dominant, that divinest principle in nature, by which the spirit of nature can alone manifest itself, and can alone be approached. It is only in human communities that this principle can be denied and defied, for in earth, and in ocean, and in the infinite universe, it has an instinctive and invincible supremacy. But man, by his mad ambition to be better than nature, and than the God of nature, violates the principle which sanctifies, while so beautifully diversifying, nature. There would and could be no *Sonderlings* on a small scale, unless man himself were impiously and insanelly a *Sonderling* on the grandest scale. Our poor *Sonderling* is not willingly, but almost in spite of himself, a social insurgent. He forgets, however, that by being a separatist from the multitude, in things not essential, he is less able in things essential, to manifest mightily his own manhood. The *Sonderling* may be a good man, may be a gifted man, he cannot be a great man; for it is not the passing form, but the undying substance, which the great man keeps ever before him. When we say of any one that he is eccentric, we are simply saying that, to that extent, he is not a great man; for the great man is not a comet or a meteor, but a star, or a cluster of stars. True order, however, unlike false order, never wars with individuality, with diversity. The *Sonderling*, the antagonist both of true order and of false, is a nobler being, is more our brother, than the mechanical slave, both of true order and false. And Hallberg the *Sonderling* was more venerable and even loveable than the hosts of mechanical slaves that denounced him.



## TWO ADVENTURES.

SO I am to relate adventures. A dangerous thing, in truth, for I am certain to incur severe criticism. Many a learned gentleman, highly indignant at the frivolous tenor of my writings, will make me the object of pregnant reproach, urging that a man who occupies himself with philological inquiries and etymological speculations should not enter upon the profane field of adventures. But let those gentlemen who softly recline in their easy chairs, cry out ever so often, "Profane! improper!" I shall continue now and then to relate some little stories selected from the various occurrences of my journey. And I do it with the more pleasure for the readers of the *Argory*, inasmuch I am not quite a stranger to them, and though I may have now and then proved tedious, I know they will this time also favour me with their indulgence.

## I.

First of all, then, I must beg my readers to accompany me to Tebriz, an old commercial town in Persia. I had fixed my abode in the spacious and stately caravanserai in the beautiful bazaar of the Emir, intending to continue my journey to Teheran. It was in the month of June. The heat was oppressive indoors, and it was extremely sultry outside. I had walked about a considerable time in the bazaar, and had feasted my eyes on the motley throng of Persians, who, with strange gesticulations and loud cries, offered their wares for sale. Returning to my cell, I sat down and enjoyed the comparative coolness it afforded. I reflected with pleasure on the success with which I had performed my part as a Dervish. The Dervish has few wants; but there is one peculiar source of pain to which he is very liable. Certain creepers take up their abode in the folds of his garments, and, impelled by hunger, often subject him to a momentary torment. In this case he must strip and commence a hunt after the little bloodsuckers, whose fate, when caught, it is easy to imagine.

I was sitting in a corner of my cell, engaged in this unpoetic occupation, when several Europeans entered, followed by two or three Persian servants. The principal person among them, who from his dress I judged to be either a member of an embassy or a gentleman tourist, looked around him with prying eyes. European travellers in the East are usually much struck by the sight of a Dervish. No wonder, then, that this individual remained standing before me for some moments surveying the features of my bare and shaven head.

"Only look," he said, in English, turning round to his companions, "with what pleasure this Dervish pursues his hunt."

"With pleasure!" I cried, in the same language, interrupting him; "if you envy me this occupation, I beg you to lend me a helping hand."

Startled and confounded, they gazed at me for a moment in silence.

"What," cried one, "you a Dervish and know English! Who are you? where did you learn English?" These were the few words which, in their first surprise, they addressed to me.

I remained silent. The questions were urgently repeated; but I gave no

reply. After having suffered their importunity some time longer, I said to the servant, in Persian, "Tell these unbelievers they must not disturb me any longer, for I have something else to do than converse with them." This answer was translated to them. My gentleman became very angry; I never saw any one so tormented by curiosity; nevertheless he was obliged to leave my cell without having it gratified. Servant after servant was sent to me in the hope of obtaining an explanation, and presents were even offered me, but in vain. I remained inexorable: first, because too intimate an acquaintance with Ferengees, though not in the least dangerous, did not suit my assumed character as a Dervish; and secondly, because the joke pleased me extremely, and though I did not foresee how it would end, I felt a certain satisfaction in mystifying those strangers.

Three years passed away. I had traversed Central Asia in the same Dervish costume, and had met with many strange adventures. On my return to the free shores of England, I was treated with such kindness as I scarcely deserved, and was one evening invited to sup at the house of Lady N. in a very fashionable part of London. All was splendour and magnificence. The beauty of the daughters of Albion eclipsed the brilliancy of the silver chandeliers. I, of course, was in ordinary evening dress. But what was my astonishment when, looking about me, I recognised in a fine, tall young man the English traveller who had visited me in my cell at Tebriz. "Ha!" thought I, "we shall have a good joke now." I looked at his features again more closely. "Really it is he! I am not mistaken. Well, this is famous."

At length the repast was at an end. The ladies retired, the gentlemen remained, and drank of those delicious wines which abound in England, though none of them grow there. At last they also rose from their seats and joined the ladies in the drawing-room. Scarcely had we entered when some of the ladies asked me to sit down near them, and relate to them one or two of my adventures in the East.

"Oh yes, ladies," said I; "many things have happened to me which could not be mentioned in my book. I will now relate to you an interesting little episode; but first, I must beg you to invite that tall gentleman, who at dinner sat near the head of the table, to be one of the auditory."

"That gentleman," interrupted a lady, "is Lord A. Did you ever meet him in the course of your travels?"

I was just about to answer, when Lord A., who, it seems, had heard the wish expressed by me, with two other gentlemen approached us, and joined our circle; curious to know why his presence was required, he stared at me with amazement.

"I suppose you know me, my lord?" I said.

"No, sir, I have never seen you before, to the best of my recollection."

"Consider me more attentively, my lord, and then perhaps you will recollect my features. I assure you that we met once in the course of our travels."

Lord A. looked at me again still more carefully, and after a while said, "No, I cannot in the least recollect your features."

"What! you do not remember the Dervish who, at Tebriz, excited your

astonishment by this occupation?" and at the same time I imitated the operation of which he had been a witness.

This pantomime produced its effect. His countenance expressed the greatest surprise, his eyes sparkled, and turning to one of the gentlemen who stood near him, he cried, "Yes, it's the same—the very Dervish who so excited our curiosity at Tebriz. But what a change! No, I should never have recognized you," he said, turning to me again; "who could have imagined that we should meet again in so different a situation!" Great was the amusement of the company when my lord and his friends gave a further explanation of the incident.

## II.

I was in the south of Persia. My love of new scenes had driven me from the comfortable dwelling of the Turkish embassy at Teheran to Shiraz, which was the birthplace of Hafiz and of Saadi. As prudence counselled me to adopt a disguise in Iran, I chose for this excursion the costume of a Dervish of Bagdad. The red silk keffie (a large handkerchief) with the brown red's me (a head fillet) formed my head-dress; the Bagdad d'supe indicated the nationality I had assumed. No Persian needed to avoid intercourse with me. No one imagined that I was an impure Ferengée; and although I thus enjoyed unmolested for a considerable time the society of those fervent followers of Mahomet, the Southern Persians, still I longed for the rational conversation of a European.

There was only one at Shiraz—a Swede, who had held the post of district physician for several years. I had already heard of him at Teheran, and he had the reputation of being an honest and excellent man. I resolved, therefore, to pay him a visit, and to begin our acquaintance with a joke which should prove a source of amusement to both. I entered his house with the usual greeting of a Dervish. In the belief that I was a mendicant Dervish, he offered me a few copper coins, which I refused, saying, "It is not money I desire, but thy confidence."

"And wherefore wouldst thou have that, Dervish?" what wouldst thou do with it?"

"I come, commissioned by the chief of my order, to lead thee from the wrong path in which thou walkest, to the right one. The fame of thy wisdom and goodness has penetrated to the banks of the Tigris, and it deeply grieves my spiritual superior that thou entertainest false notions of the most sublime of sciences."

"So, then," answered the Swede, smiling, "thou desirest to convert me to the Mahometan religion; well, what are thy arguments? perhaps thou canst work a miracle or two."

"As for my arguments, behold here the Koran which contains them; and miracles I can perform, as far as I am authorized by my superior."

My grave looks and gloomy air appeared to excite interest in the Swede, who probably had already received several similar invitations. He said, "Thy arguments are pretty well known to me; but I am curious to see what miracles thou canst perform. Art thou a magician?"

"No; but I am a master of all the sciences and languages of the world, and I can prove it to thee."

The doctor became more and more interested. He now began to question me in the Persian language about medicine, in which language our conversation had been hitherto carried on. As he was unacquainted with the technical terms in Arabic, I had the advantage of him here, although I had but a scanty knowledge of the science itself. He next examined me in geography, and when he found that in this science I was his match, the good doctor was extremely surprised, though I confess my knowledge of it is but moderate. He lost his patience, and uttered some expressions of astonishment in the Swedish language. The language of the Frithiof-saga, a favourite poem of my youth, sounded delightfully in my ears. I, too, became animated, and pronounced in his native language a few words relative to the astonishment he had expressed.

"What! you know Swedish!" cried he. "Now the riddle is solved, for, be you what you will, you are no Dervish. But for heaven's sake, how did you become so well acquainted with the East? and where did you learn its languages?"

"I repeat," replied I, still preserving the grave air of a Dervish, "that my sheik has endowed me with all possible knowledge, solely to enable me to convince thee of the truth. The power which taught the wise king Solomon the language of birds and worms, that same power was my teacher. I now leave thee, reflect well on my offer, and to-morrow morning I must have an answer."

The good Swede was utterly astonished. He pressed me to remain some time longer. In his confusion he spoke Persian, French, English, and German jumbled together. In my answers I made use of the same mixture of languages. At last, rising from my seat, I hastily left him. I went from thence to a mosque, where I had fixed my lodgings; and scarcely had I risen from my bed the next morning, when my honest Swede, who had been tormented the whole night by curiosity, made his appearance, with the resolution to penetrate into the mystery of my character. He again began to address to me the same questions as the day before; but I still maintained the assumed tone of a proselyte-maker. This irritated him very much; but just as he was on the point of leaving, I could not help pitying the excitement in which I saw him, and thinking I had carried the joke far enough, I burst into a fit of laughter, and seizing his hand, shook it heartily in the European fashion, and communicated to him my origin, name, and the object of my travels.

"I should have guessed at once that you were not an Oriental; but the cleverness with which you imitated the language of a Mollah confounded me. And now, since you have not succeeded in making a convert of me, I will make a convert of you, and I beg you will take up your abode in my house."

As I cared little whether or not I laid aside the mask at Shiraz, I immediately accepted the friendly offer of the honest Swede. I removed to his house, and was his guest for the space of six weeks; and whenever at his hospitable board he raised his glass to drink my health in excellent Chular



wine, he never failed to drink also that of my spiritual superior, who had endowed me with such magic powers, and who had so kindly sent me to Shiraz to bear him company, as he had long yearned to enjoy the society of a European.

I spent many happy days with him at Shiraz; and the strange manner in which we met will not, I am confident, be soon forgotten by either of us.

ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY.

### FRA GEROLAMO.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

**I**N one of the recesses of the mountains on the eastern side of Lake Como, about half-way between Varenna and Colico, there formerly stood a convent of Franciscan monks. Considering the secluded nature of the locality, they were rather a numerous body, numbering more than twenty persons, including the superior and the lay-brothers.

Many of the monks were men of considerable learning, and generally much respected. Although the convent was distant from the more populous part of the lake, the brethren, from the nature of their duties, were well known in all the towns and villages surrounding it. In addition to their ecclesiastical duties, they were frequently occupied in avocations which in the present day would be considered entirely secular. They were, of course, expected to officiate in the different parish churches when, from sickness or any other cause, the regular priests were unable to attend, and they also practised the art of medicine, in which several of their body had at divers times acquired great reputation. They had, moreover, considerable skill in the useful arts, and their advice on subjects connected with these, as well as on agriculture, was highly valued.

There was one amongst them, however—Fra Gerolamo by name—whose reputation far exceeded that of the others. He was an excellent preacher, and much sought after to give spiritual consolation at the bedside of the sick and dying, and was also esteemed the most skilful leech of the convent. Although his services in the latter capacity were eagerly desired by the wealthy, his greatest delight was to give solace to the sick poor; and a kinder friend to the peasantry could not have been found in the whole lake district. From the discretion he showed in distributing alms intrusted to his care, he had become the favourite almoner of the rich residents around Lake Como and in the Brianza, and not of them only; considerable sums of money being also forwarded to him from the wealthy nobles of Milan, to be distributed among the poor as he might think fit.

Although no particular district had been marked out by the superior as the field for Fra Gerolamo's ministrations, there was one he always chose in preference to others. His choice was not in any way opposed by his reverend brethren, as it was by far the most impoverished and unhealthy portion of the district under their care. It was that part of the Valteline which extends from Colico for several miles towards Bormio, and



through which passes the present military road to the Stelvio mountain. Here chronic sickness was to be found in company with poverty; the former caused not only by the sterile nature of the land, but by the frequent overflowing of the Adda river when the snow melted on the mountains, causing it to rush onwards towards the lake with great impetuosity. Often it carried all before it, destroying the spring cultivations of the peasant, and frequently leaving whole fields of well-tilled land, which before had been green with young crops, covered with a layer of stones. The sickness was principally caused by the malaria which arose from the marshes when the inundations had subsided.

In this dreary locality Fra Gerolamo passed a considerable portion of his time. For weeks together he would quit his cell before sunrise, and, with a heavy weight of food in a sack thrown over his shoulder, and his wallet full of medicines, he would start off on foot, and resolutely keep on his way, insensible to fatigue, although he had many miles to pass before he arrived at the field of his labours. There he would remain the whole day, dispensing religious instruction, visiting the sick, and distributing the food he had brought with him to the most needy. His duties over, he would return to the convent in the evening, less wearied than sorrowful at feeling that all he had done was not a twentieth part of what was needed; and on the morrow he would start again on the same mission, to return home in the evening equally broken spirited.

There was something eminently attractive in Fra Gerolamo's personal appearance. His features were delicately formed and handsome; he was above the middle height, and very erect. In figure, perhaps, he was somewhat too thin; but this defect was to a great measure concealed by the flowing shape of the frock he wore. In age he was certainly not more than forty; and in temper he was kind, patient, and placable. During the many years he had resided in the convent, no one had ever seen him fairly out of humour. It would be folly to say that he had no human infirmities; but these were of a very venial description. He had a passion for collecting books, and was by no means liberal in lending them to others, carefully locking the door of his cell (for there he had established his library) whenever he left the convent. Although he had taken the vow of humility, his feelings were aristocratic to an extent hardly consistent with the rules of his convent; but, to do him justice, he carefully repressed and concealed them. Yet, in spite of all his caution, they would occasionally manifest themselves, and he had more than once received a sharp rebuke from his superior for giving way to them. It should be stated, however, that Fra Gerolamo was not without some excuse. He was, in fact, sprung from a branch of one of the most wealthy and aristocratic families in Lombardy; and there was good reason to believe that the present holder of the title ought in right to have ceded it to Fra Gerolamo. The monk himself was fully convinced on the subject; and without daring to mention it to his superior, the idea frequently crossed his mind whether he should not take steps to obtain what he firmly believed to be his own. He was further stimulated to this course by the fact of his having a widowed sister in poor circumstances, who

had a son who might accept the title even if he himself could not. But frequently as the thought had presented itself to his mind, he had never yet endeavoured to have his claims to the title and estates thoroughly investigated.

One evening Fra Gerolamo returned from a visit to his district, not only fatigued but exceedingly unwell. He did not, however, mention the circumstance, but took his place with the others at the supper table. The superior, noticing that he ate little, and remarking his expression of fatigue, asked if he felt indisposed. Fra Gerolamo replied that he did not feel so well as usual, but he had no doubt he would soon be better, and he then helped himself to some food, though he had not the slightest appetite. The meal being over, he retired to his cell and passed a very disturbed night, suffering alternately from burning heats and shivering fits. Next morning he rose from his bed somewhat later than usual, and although exceedingly ill, he prepared to set out again to the favourite field of his labours in the Valteline. His superior happened, however, to pass him as he was leaving the convent, and noticing his pallid countenance and sunken eye, he inquired, with much alarm, whether he was suffering from ill health. Fra Gerolamo told him he felt rather indisposed, but that he thought the walk and occupation might possibly do him good.

"My son," said the superior, "I must order you to remain at home to-day. I perceive clearly that your zeal has far exceeded your strength, and that you are now suffering the effects of it. I will send one of the lay-brothers with the food you have prepared, and he shall give it to the persons you name, but you must remain at home."

Of course Fra Gerolamo had no alternative but to obey; and with a somewhat sorrowful heart he gave his directions to the lay-brother, and then seeking his cell, he remained stretched upon his couch almost the whole of the day, too weak to move.

It was some days before Fra Gerolamo had sufficiently recovered his health to enable him to resume his duties, and then the superior prohibited him from visiting the Valteline till further orders.

"I have a mission for you to the Brianza, my son," said the superior, a few days later. "You will remain there for some weeks, and I trust that before your return you will have fully regained your strength. Besides preaching, you will have an opportunity of collecting alms, and I promise you that whatever you bring back with you I will leave at your disposal for the poor of the Valteline."

Fra Gerolamo bowed obedience, and the next day, having received his instructions, he set out on his mission.

After he had been about a week in the Brianza, he had occasion to preach at a village church in the mountains not very far distant from the castle of the famous Innominato. Although he had frequently heard of the astrologer he had never yet been in his society, and he now resolved to pay him a visit. In this he was actuated by two motives: he might implore aid in succouring the suffering inhabitants of the Valteline, and also consult the learned man on the possibility of his obtaining possession of the title and territory he believed himself rightfully entitled to. It should here be clearly

understood, however, that although the Innominato was well known to Fra Gerolamo, it was solely as a man of great wealth, learning, and benevolence. Had he received the slightest hint from any trustworthy person of the Innominato being a magician, nothing, probably, would have induced him to visit the castle, for he was too good a Catholic to seek the acquaintance of any man whom he suspected to be in communication with evil spirits.

It was late in the afternoon when Fra Gerolamo arrived at the Hospice, where he was met by one of the Innominato's servants, who inquired on what business he had come.

"My wish is to see your master," was the monk's reply; "but if it is now inconvenient, I will return to-morrow morning, or any other time he may appoint."

"Are you not Fra Gerolamo?" inquired the servant, who had closely scrutinized him.

"Yes, my son, I am. Do you know me?"

"I saw your reverence once at Lecco, at the sick bed of a relative of mine, and it would not have been easy to forget you, though that was some years ago. My master's orders are that every one visiting the castle shall remain here till he has been told their name and business, but I am sure I may make an exception in your case. If you will go up to the castle gate, the porter, who has reason to know you even better than I do, will admit you, I am certain, without any difficulty."

The porter at the castle received Fra Gerolamo with even greater goodwill than the servant at the Hospice. After expressing his pleasure at seeing the monk, he requested him to wait below while he should go and inform the Innominato. When the porter entered the study he found his master so deeply engrossed in a book, that he inquired somewhat angrily of the man why he had interrupted him. No sooner was he told that Fra Gerolamo had paid him a visit than he rose from his chair, and throwing aside the huge volume he had been reading, hurried downstairs to receive the monk. Nothing could be more courteous than the reception the astrologer gave him. He led him by the hand upstairs into his study, and placed him in his own chair. He then ordered viands to be served, and the best wines put before him. He also desired Pietro to prepare a bed for the monk, whom he had already persuaded to remain in the castle for the night.

After Fra Gerolamo had partaken of some refreshment, the Innominato again expressed the pleasure he had in receiving him, and inquired in what way he could serve him.

"To say the truth," said the monk, "the object of my visit is twofold. First, I come to implore your charity for the poor peasantry of the Valteline, and afterwards to ask you to give me a little advice on an affair of my own."

He then gave the Innominato a graphic description of the miserable state of the inhabitants of the Valteline, and the great necessity there was for some immediate relief, as hundreds of them might otherwise perish from starvation and disease. The Innominato listened silently and with great interest, and when the monk had finished, he said,

"Reverend father, I am much indebted to you for bringing the subject under

my notice. To-morrow, before you leave the castle, I will place in your hands my contribution to the good cause you are engaged in; and if it will not be sufficient to relieve all who are in need, it shall at any rate be large enough to afford them considerable assistance. Now let me know in what way I can serve you personally."

Fra Gerolamo then entered into a somewhat lengthy narrative of his family history, and his supposed right to the title and estates. The Innominato listened patiently and with great courtesy, but evidently with far less interest than he had shown to the monk's description of the Valteline and its inhabitants. Having heard Fra Gerolamo to the end, he said,

"I am not sufficiently well versed in the law to give you an opinion worth having, but I have an agent in Milan, one of the shrewdest lawyers in that city. To-morrow, should you desire it, I will give you a line to him, and, without expense to you, he shall give your suit every attention. But assure me that you will not be offended if I ask you what is perhaps a somewhat indiscreet question."

"I am sure," said Fra Gerolamo, "that you can ask me no question which I would not very willingly answer."

"Then, are you not somewhat imprudent in further pursuing the doubtful question of your inheritance?"

"No," said the monk, in a tone of considerable surprise; "why should you think so?"

"Because it appears to me that you may lose more than you can gain, even should you succeed, which is doubtful."

"How so?"

"At present you are beloved and respected by all; and I am fully convinced that you have great pleasure in carrying out the benevolent works in which you are so busily employed. By becoming wealthy and noble, is there no risk of your also turning proud and selfish? Judging from the conduct of the nobles of our day, illustrious birth and great riches are by no means conducive to a pious and charitable course of life."

Fra Gerolamo remained silent for some moments, giving due consideration to the Innominato's suggestion.

"No," he replied at last, "I do not fear such a result, although I thank you for the caution. I trust I know myself too well to be in any danger of that kind. Besides, should I succeed in gaining my inheritance, it will be my constant prayer to be guarded from pride and avarice."

"So be it then," said the Innominato. "To-morrow I will give you a letter to my lawyer, as well as my contribution to your poor."

The conversation now turned on works of charity performed by the brethren of Fra Gerolamo's convent, and other benevolent subjects, and the two continued their talk till a somewhat late hour of the night.

Next morning, when the astrologer and the monk met at breakfast, the expression of the latter was remarkably thoughtful. He was also very silent during the meal, replying only in monosyllables to any remark or question of the Innominato. The meal over, Fra Gerolamo told his host that he must now leave him, as he had to reach Como before night, and must visit some

sick persons on the road. On hearing this, the Innominato rose from his chair, and opening a chest by his side, took out a purse of gold, and placing it in the hand of the monk, told him to apply it to the relief of the poor sufferers in the Valteline.

"If you want more," he said, "send to me, and you shall have it. And now, if you wish it, I will write you a letter of introduction to my lawyer in Milan."

"I do not wish it," said Fra Gerolamo. "But I thank you equally for the offer."

"Would you think me unmannerly if I asked your reason for refusing the letter this morning, when you so readily accepted the offer of it last night?"

"Not in the least," said the monk, "although you may think me somewhat superstitious when I tell you that I have changed my resolution in consequence of a dream I had last night, and which, I feel assured, was a warning sent me from heaven."

"No sooner had I quitted you yesterday than I threw myself upon my couch, and in a few minutes I was fast asleep. For some time my slumbers were most profound, nor do I remember my dreams, if I had any. At last, I thought I was in Como, in a house near the cathedral; and many people were in the room where I was standing. These all showed me the greatest respect. Several indeed applied to me to assist them in obtaining employment in the state. Others begged that I would grant them leases on easy terms, urging that as I was one of the richest lords in the land, I could easily afford to be generous. Some asked me to use my influence with the government to get their relatives released from prison, all of whom, they assured me, had been unjustly sentenced. I should also mention that, although the different courtiers and supplicants offered me adulation, and treated me as a person possessing immense wealth and power, I still wore my monk's frock; the simplicity of which appeared to be the more remarkable when compared with the magnificent costumes of many of those who surrounded me. I felt great pride in the comparison, knowing that lowly as my monk's grade was in the eyes of the dignitaries of the church, I was still far above the splendidly-attired crowd who were now so humble in my presence. I felt thoroughly happy, when in a moment I had proof that, even in my exalted position, I was still capable of suffering severe humiliation, for presently I saw enter at the further door an infirm and shabbily-dressed woman, who held by the hand a lad of about fourteen years of age, as poorly clad as herself. A blush flew to my cheek, and I felt deeply annoyed, for I recognized in them my sister and her son. Dreading lest the courtiers around me should detect our relationship, I walked rapidly towards my sister, and drew her hastily aside, feeling the while that all eyes were directed towards me with astonishment and curiosity.

"What are you doing here?" I said to her. "Why do you thus disgrace me by coming dressed in this disreputable and squalid manner?"

"My dear brother," she said, her eyes filling with tears, "what am I to do? we are starving. I have not a farthing left in the world. Pray assist me."

"The porter does his duty very badly," I heard some one say in the room. "Why does he allow such mendicants to enter and annoy his illus-



trious reverence in that barefaced manner? That he is most charitable we all know, but that is no reason why he should be subjected to such persecution. Here, Stephano,' he said to a servant, 'find out who that woman is and bring me her name. I will soon set the police after her.'

"Terrified at the idea of the man questioning her, I thrust some money into her hand and requested her to go away. She held the coin for a moment in her hand without moving. Her eyes filled with tears, and she was upon the point of addressing me, when I saw the servant advancing towards us. I again told her angrily to be gone, and I remember her turning round towards the stair-head to obey me, when suddenly I found myself standing by the side of the lake, still surrounded by the gay crowd of flatterers. A large bark, with several rowers richly dressed, was waiting to receive me, and I stepped into it followed by several of my courtiers, while the others entered smaller barks which were in readiness for them, and on a signal being given they all pushed from the shore. The rowers exerted themselves wonderfully, but those in my own bark being both more numerous and stronger than the others, our course was very rapid, and we soon left them behind. Onward we went, the distance between us rapidly increasing. I lounged back languidly in the richly-cushioned seat of the boat, and silently listened to the conversation of the rest. It turned entirely on my great wealth and unbounded liberality, and they blessed themselves and thanked heaven that so fruitful and beautiful a territory as that which surrounded the lake should have fallen into the hands of a man so powerful and enlightened.

"Suddenly I found that I had landed on the spot on which Bellagio stands; but I was alone. Although there was not a house near me, nor a human being in sight, it did not seem to cause me the slightest surprise. I climbed to the top of a hill and viewed from its summit the three branches of the lake, and the mountains surrounding them, with a feeling of intense satisfaction, as I reflected that all I saw—houses, palaces, farms, vineyards, and the thousand barks which floated on the waters—were my own, and that I, so lately an obscure monk, was now among the richest and most powerful nobles of the land. The longer I viewed the prospect the more I was delighted with it. The idea struck me that I would build a palace on that spot. The position, I thought, was admirable, as from it I could survey the principal portion of my domains. I resolved that it should be commenced immediately, and that in point of magnificence and beauty of design it should surpass that of any other noble in the land.

"Lake, mountains, palaces, and barks all vanished, and I found myself in a darkness so profound that it might almost have been felt. The earth under my feet seemed to have gone, and I was sinking rapidly through space, though not a breath of air could I feel. I did not even seem to respire. After I appeared to have sunk to an immense depth, I found myself upon my feet again, but outer darkness still surrounded me. I moved about cautiously, stretching forth my hands to ascertain, if possible, what I might be near; but nothing came within my reach. Presently, on raising my eyes, I perceived the glimmering of a star in the heavens, but only one. Although at first its light was so faint, that I had some difficulty in clearly detecting it, it gradually



became brighter, until at last it cast a slight glimmer over the spot on which I was standing, so that I could see I was in a sort of large square courtyard, surrounded on all sides with buildings. I now again began to feel cautiously around me, and found as I came near to the side that the buildings above me were supported on arches, and on continuing my search I thought I could detect that I was in the cloisters of a monastery, not my own, but one of far greater magnitude.

"For some time I stood musing under the arches, considering what I should do next. The solitary star still continued to shine brightly in the heavens, when the sound of distant music fell upon my ear. I listened attentively, and the voices of the singers became clearer, as if they were advancing towards me. Onwards they seemed to come, and I could now detect that they were a numerous body of monks chanting one of the services of our church. Still nearer and nearer they came, till, at the extremity of what seemed to be a long corridor, I could distinguish a procession of monks, their faces covered with their hoods, and each carrying in his hand a lighted taper, with the single exception of their leader, who carried a cross. They continued to advance till they reached me. I made no room for them to pass, but stood motionless, gazing on them with wonder. They took no notice of my presence either, but continued to march onwards, and seemed to walk through me, as if I were to them an invisible spirit.

"When the procession had passed me, I turned round and followed it, glancing only for a moment at the star, which still continued to give out its solitary light. The monks now entered an immense room, used apparently as the dormitory of the convent, for around the walls bedsteads were ranged. The room itself, before the entrance of the monks, must have been gloomy indeed, for it was lighted only by one small lamp which burned before a picture of the Virgin. The procession marched to the further extremity of the room, chanting the while, and then, suddenly ceasing their singing, they grouped themselves around a bed on which lay one of their order, apparently at the point of death. I shall never forget the countenance of the sick man—so fearful was its expression of terror. It had so painful an effect on me, that I raised my eyes from the bed, and my gaze fell upon the window above it. Through it I noticed that the same star was shining brightly, and still alone without another near it.

"The monks, who had ceased their chant when they placed themselves around the sick man's bed, now recommenced it; and my attention was again drawn to the patient. The leader, with the cross in his hand, now advanced to put it to the lips of the dying man, who with intense anxiety on his gaunt countenance made a great effort to meet it by partially raising himself; and in so doing the coverlet fell somewhat aside, disclosing a purse of gold which he tightly clasped in his hand. The monk immediately withdrew the cross from the sick man's lips, and snatching the purse from his hand, threw it on the ground, and in a moment the gold was rolling on the floor. The patient, exhausted, fell back, his head on the pillow. Then pressing his hands together, as in prayer, he muttered something almost inaudible. On listening attentively, however, I could hear that he was only begging that his gold might be restored

to him. Death now seemed to stamp his seal upon the man's face, his hands sunk from their position of supplication, the usual symptoms of immediate dissolution became manifest, and a few minutes afterwards his spirit fled.

"As soon as the wretched man had expired, I looked round me, and found that the monks had vanished, with the exception of the one who held the cross. He now turned towards me as he was standing at the opposite side of the bed, and with his hand threw back his hood. It would be impossible to describe the angelic beauty of his countenance, but so stern was its expression that from fear I sank down on my knees before him. After I had remained motionless for some moments, he slowly raised his arm and pointed impressively to the bed on which the dead man lay. I rose from my knees to gaze upon the corpse, and to my horror found that its features were my own.

"What was the termination of my dream," continued Fra Gerolamo, "I know not; but I remember too well the lesson I received last night ever to forget it. No, I will not trouble you for a letter of introduction to your lawyer. I will remain the poor monk I now am, and not risk my eternal welfare in the temptations which I find riches bring with them."

After again thanking the Innominato for his liberality to the poor peasantry of the Valteline, Fra Gerolamo left the castle, accompanied to the gate by his host, who then bade him farewell.



### THE WILD BEAST OF GÉVAUDAN.

IN the year 1765, the French, Dutch, and Brussels papers teemed with marvellous accounts of a monstrous creature, called "The Wild Beast of Gévaudan," whose ravages for a time spread terror and even despair among the peasantry of Provence and Languedoc, especially in those districts of the ancient Narbonne Gaul which were mountainous, woody, and cold, and where communication was rendered difficult by the want of good roads and navigable rivers.

In the April of that year a drawing of this animal was sent to the Intendant of Alençon, entitled "*Figure de la beste (sic) feroce l'on nomme l'hyene qui a devoré plus que 80 personnes dans le Gévaudan.*" An engraving of this is now before us, and certainly its circulation must have added to the confusion of the nature of the original. This print represents the beast with a huge head, large eyes, a long tongue, a double row of sharp fangs, small and erect ears like those of a cat, the paws and body of a lion, with the tail of a cow, which trails on the ground with a bushy tuft at the end.

In December, 1764, it first made its appearance at St. Flour, in Provence, and on the 20th it devoured a little girl who was herding cattle near Mende. A detachment of light dragoons, sent in search of it, hunted in vain for six weeks the wild and mountainous parts of Languedoc. Though a thousand crowns were offered by the province of Mende to any person who would slay it, and public prayers were put up in all the churches for deliverance

from this singular scourge, which soon became so great a terror to those districts, as ever the dragon was of which we read in the *Seven Champions of Christendom*.

No two accounts tallied as to the appearance of this animal, and some of these, doubtless the offspring of the terror and superstition of the peasantry, added greatly to the dread it inspired. French hyperbole was not wanting, and the gazettes were filled with the most singular exaggerations and gasconades.

The groves of olive and mulberry trees, and the vineyards, were neglected, the wood-cutters abandoned the forests, and hence fuel became provokingly dear, even in Paris.

In the month of January we are told that it devoured a great many persons, chiefly children and young girls. It was said by those who escaped to be larger than a wolf, but that previous to springing on its victim, by crouching on the ground, it seemed no longer than a fox. "At the distance of one or two fathoms it rises on its hind legs, and leaps upon its prey, which it seizes by the neck or throat, but is afraid of horned cattle, from which it runs away."

It was alleged by some to be the cub of a tiger and lioness; by others, of a panther and hyena, which had escaped from a private menagerie belonging to Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy. A peasant of Marvejols, who wounded it by a musket shot, found a handful of its hair, "which stank very much;" he averred it to "be the bigness of a year-old calf, the head a foot in length, the chest large as that of a horse, his howling in the night resembled the braying of an ass." According to collated statements, the beast was seen within the same hour at different places, in one instance twenty-four miles apart; hence many persons naturally maintained that there were *two*.

On the 27th December, 1764, a young woman, in her nineteenth year, was torn to pieces by it at Bounesal, near Mende. Next day it appeared in the wood of St. Martin de Born, and was about to spring upon a girl of twelve years, when her father rushed to her protection. The woodman, a bold and hardy fellow, rendered desperate by the danger of his child, kept it at bay for a quarter of an hour, "the beast all the while endeavouring to fly at the girl, and they would both inevitably have become its prey if some horned cattle which the father kept in the wood had not fortunately come up, on which the beast was terrified and ran away."

This account was attested on oath by the woodman, before the mayor and other civil authorities of Mende, an episcopal city in Languedoc.

On the 9th of January an entire troop of the 10th Light Horse (the *Volontaires Etrangers de Clermont-Prince*), then stationed at St. Chely, was despatched under Captain Duhamel in quest of the animal, which had just torn and disembowelled a man midway between their quarters and La Garge. On this occasion the Bishop of Mende said a solemn mass, and the consecrated Host was elevated in the cathedral, which was thronged by the devout for the entire day; but the beast still defied all efforts for his capture or destruction, and soon after, "in the wood of St. Colme, four leagues from Rhodéz, it devoured a shepherdess of eighteen years of age, celebrated for her beauty."

The English papers began to treat the affair of "the wild beast" as a

jest or allegory invented by the Jesuits to render the Protestants odious and absurd, as it was said to have escaped from the Duke of Savoy's collection; and "this circumstance is designed," says one journal, "to point out the Protestants who are supposed to derive their principles from the ancient Waldenses, who inhabited the valleys of Piedmont, and were the earliest promoters of the Reformation."

A writer in a Scottish newspaper of the period goes still further, and announces his firm belief that this tormentor of the Gévaudans was nothing more or less than the wild beast prophesied in the Apocalypse of St. John, whereon the scarlet lady was mounted. Another asserts that it was typical of the whole Romish clergy, and that its voracious appetite answered to another part of Scripture, "conceived in the words *eating up my people as they eat bread*,"—his favourite food being generally little boys and girls of Protestant parentage.\*

After a long and fruitless chase, Captain Duhamel, before returning to quarters at St. Chely, resolved to make a vigorous attempt to destroy this mysterious scourge of Languedoc; but his extreme ardour caused his plans to miscarry.

Posting his volontaires, some on horseback, and some on foot, at all the avenues of a wood to which it had been traced, it was soon roused from its lair by the explosion of pistols and sound of trumpets. There was a cry raised of "*Voilà! Gardez la Bête!*" and Duhamel, an officer of great courage, who had dismounted, rushed forward to assail it sword in hand, but had the mortification to see it, with a terrible roar, spring past the very place he had just quitted.

Two of his dragoons fired their pistols, but both missed. They then pursued it on the spur for nearly a league, and though seldom more than four or five paces from it, they were unable to cut it down, and ultimately it escaped, by leaping a high stone wall which their horses were unable to surmount; and after crossing a marsh which lay on the other side, it leasurably retired to a wild forest beyond.

The baffled dragoons reported that it "was as big as the largest park dog, very shaggy, of a brown colour, a yellow belly, a very large head, and had two very long tusks, ears short and erect, and a branched tail, which it sets up very much when running." Fear had no share in this strange description, for the officers of Clermont's regiment asserted that the two dragoons were as brave men as any in the corps; but some declared that it was a bear, and others a wild boar!

On the 12th of January it attacked seven children (five boys and two girls) who were at play near the Mountain of Marguerite. It tore the entire cheek off one boy, and gobbled it up before him; but the other four, led by a boy named Portefaix, having stakes shod with iron, drove the beast into a marsh, where it sunk up to the belly, and then disappeared. That night a boy's body was found half devoured in the neighbourhood of St. Marcel; on the 21st it severely lacerated a girl, and (according to the *Paris Gazette*) "next day attacked a woman, and *bit off her head!*"

\* *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 1764.

The four brave boys who put it to flight received a handsome gratuity from the Bishop of Mende, and by the king's order were educated for the army; the *Gazette* adds that the king gave the young Portefaix a gift of four hundred livres, and three hundred to each of his companions.

As females and little ones seemed the favourite food of the beast, Captain Duhamel now ordered several of his dragoons to dress themselves as women, and with their pistols and fusils concealed, to accompany the children who watched the cattle; and the King of France now offered from his privy purse two thousand crowns, in addition to the one thousand offered by the province of Mende, for the head of this terrible animal.

Inspired by a hope of winning the proffered reward, a stout and hardy peasant of Languedoc, armed with a good musket, set out in search of it; but on beholding the beast suddenly near him, surrounded by all the real and imaginary terrors it inspired, he forgot alike his musket and his resolution; he shrieked with terror and fled, and soon after "the creature devoured a woman of the village of Jullange, at the foot of the Mountain of Marguerite."

As the terror was increasing in Gévaudan and the Vivarez, the offered rewards were again increased to no less than ten thousand livres; by the diocese of Mende, two thousand; by the province of Languedoc, two thousand; by the king, six thousand; and the following placard was posted up in all the towns and cities of the adjacent provinces:—

"By order of the King, and the Intendant of the Province of Languedoc:

"Notice is given to all persons, that his Majesty, being deeply affected by the situation of his subjects, now exposed to the ravages of the wild beast which for four months past has infested Vivarez and Gévaudan, and being desirous to stop the progress of such a calamity, has determined to promise a reward of six thousand livres to any person or persons who shall kill the animal. Such as are willing to undertake the pursuit of him, may previously apply to the Sieur de la Font, sub-deputy to the Intendant of Mende, who will give them the necessary instructions, agreeable to what has been prescribed by the ministry on the part of his Majesty."

Still the ubiquitous beast remained untaken; and a letter from Paris of the 18th February relates the terror it occasioned to a party, consisting of M. le Tivré, a councillor, and two young ladies, who were on their way to visit M. de Sante, the curé of Vaisour.

They were travelling in a herlings, drawn by four post horses, with two postilions, and accompanied by a footman, who rode a saddle-horse, and was armed with a sabre. The first night, on approaching the dreaded district, they halted at Guimpe, and next morning at nine o'clock set forth, intending to lunch at Roteaux, a village situated in a bleak and mountainous place. The bailiff of Guimpe deemed it his duty to warn them, as strangers, "that the wild beast had been often seen lurking about the Chaussée that week, and that it would be proper to take an escort of armed men for their protection."

M. le Tivré and the councillor, being foolhardy, declined, and took the young ladies under their own protection; but they had scarcely proceeded two leagues when they perceived a post-chaise, attended by an outrider,



coming down the rugged road that traversed the hill of Credi, at a frightful pace, and pursued by the wild beast!

The leading horse fell, on which the terrible pursuer made a spring towards it; but M. le Tivre's footman interposed with his drawn sabre, on which the beast pricked up its ears, stood erect, and showed its fangs and mouth full of froth, whisked round, and gave the terrified valet a blow with its tail, covering all his face with blood. The rest of the narrative is ridiculously incredible, for it states, that, on perceiving a gentleman levelling a blunderbuss (which flashed in the pan), the beast darted right through the chaise of M. le Tivre, smashing the side glasses, and escaped to the wood. "The stench left in the shattered chaise was past description, and no burning of frankincense, or other method, removed it, so that it was sold for two louis, and though burned to ashes, the cinders were obliged, by order of the commissary, to be buried without the town walls!" (*Advertiser*, 1765.)

Eluding the many armed hunters who were now in pursuit of it, in the early part of February the wild beast was seen hovering in well-frequented places, on the skirts of the forests adjoining the fields and vineyards, in the hamlets, and on the highways. In Janols, the capital of the Gévaudansais, it sprang upon a child, whose cries brought his father to his aid, but ere a rescue could be effected, the poor little creature was rent asunder.

Three days afterwards, on the Feast of the Purification, five peasants, going to mass at Rientort de Randon, suddenly perceived it on the highway before them. It was crouching, and about to spring, when their shouts, and the pointed staves with which they were armed, put it to flight. On Sunday, the 3rd February, it was heard howling in the little village of St. Amans during the celebration of high mass. All the inhabitants were in church, "but as they had taken the precaution to shut up the children in their houses, it retired without doing any mischief." On the 8th it was perceived within a hundred yards of the town of Aumont. A general chase through the snow was made by the armed huntsmen; but night came on before they came within range of the dreaded fugitive.

In February and March we find it still continuing its ravages through all the pleasant valleys of the Aisne. At Soissons it worried a woman to death and partly devoured her. To add to the horror of this episode, the Paris papers add that she had been five months *enceinte*, and that "the child (which was taken from her) has been baptized." Two girls were brought to the Hospital of St. Flour in a dying state from wounds it had inflicted.

"Catharine Bayer, aged twenty years, who was attacked on the 15th January at Bastiole-de-Montfort; all that part of the head on which the hair grew is torn away, with a part of the os coronæ, and the whole pericranium with the upper part of the ear is lost. The occipital bone is likewise laid bare. The other girl belongs to St. Just; the left side of her head and neck is carried away with part of her nose and upper lip."

On the 1st of March, a man boldly charged it on horseback, but was thrown, and leaving his nag to its mercy, scrambled away and found refuge in a mill, where it besieged him for some time, till a lad of seventeen appeared, whom it lacerated with teeth and claws and left expiring outside the door. On the



road near Bazoches, it tore to pieces a woman who attempted to save a girl on which it was about to spring; and four men of that place, armed with loaded guns, watched all night, near the mangled body, in the hope that it might return; but the animal was several miles distant, and after biting several sheep and cows in a farm-yard, was at last severely wounded by Antoine Savanelle, an old soldier, who assailed it with a pitchfork, which he thrust into its throat, and he was vain enough to declare that the wound was mortal, and that he must have killed it.

This boast, however, was premature, for it soon reappeared, biting, tearing, and devouring, and though a man of Malzim wounded it by a musket shot, making it roll over with a hideous cry, it was able on the 9th to drag a child for two hundred yards from a cottage door. It dropped its prey unhurt; but on the same evening, we are told that it partly devoured a young woman near the village of Miolonettes, and committed other ravages, the mere enumeration of which would weary rather than astonish, though it was stated that not less "than twenty thousand men" (a sad exaggeration surely), noblesse, hunters, woodmen, and soldiers, were in pursuit of it, under the Count de Morangies, an old *maréchal de camp*, who personally passed a whole night near the body of the half-devoured girl, in the vain hope that the monster would return within range of his musket.

Great astonishment and ridicule were excited in England by these continued details, and under date of 13th March, a pretended letter from Paris, headed "Wonderful Intelligence!" went the round of the press.

"The wild beast that makes such a noise all over Europe, and after whom there are at least thirty thousand regular forces and seventy-thousand militia and armed peasants, proves to be a descendant on the mother's side, from the famous Dragon of Wantley, and on the father's side from a Scotch Highland Laird. He eats a house as an alderman eats a custard; with the wag of his tail he throws down a church; as he passed the convent of St. Anna Maria, and was smelling a grape-vine on the wall, he unfortunately became flatulent, by which means the whole fabric was laid in ruins and one hundred and fourteen souls perished. He was attacked on the night of the 8th instant, in his den, by a detachment of fourteen thousand men under the command of Duc de Valliant; but the platoon firing, and even the artillery, had only the effect of making him sneeze; at last he gave a slash with his tail by which we lost seven thousand men; then making a jump over the left wing, made his escape. He unfortunately made water as he passed, by which means five hundred grenadiers were drowned in the puddle; but ten thousand horse and twenty-two thousand foot are in full march to reinforce the army."

Elsewhere we find:—"Yesterday, about ten in the morning, a courier arrived (in London) from France, with the melancholy news that the wild beast had, on the 25th instant, been attacked by the *whole* French army, consisting of one hundred and twenty thousand men, whom he totally defeated in the twinkling of an eye, swallowing the whole train of artillery and devouring twenty-five thousand men."

But still in Languedoc, lovers who had lost their brides, brothers their

sisters, and parents their children, armed with guns and spears, beat the mountain sides and wild thickets for this animal, the existence of which was considered nearly or quite fabulous in London.

It would seem to have been deemed so in Holland, too, for the *Utrecht Gazette*, after detailing how bravely a poor woman of La Bessiere, named Jane Chaston, defended her little children against the beast, which appeared in her garden and tore one with its teeth, states that whatever scoffers might say, its existence was no longer doubtful, adding, "that unless we believe in the accounts of it which come from France, we must reject the greatest part of the events to which we give credit, as being of much less authority."

Louis XV. gave a handsome gratuity to Jane Chaston for her courage and tenderness in defending her children, but we are not informed how or with what she was armed.

The Duc de Praslin received a report from the Comte de Montargis, who commanded the troops in the neighbourhood of La Bessiere, to the effect that, three days after the adventure of Jane Chaston, a party of eighty dragoons, *en route* to join their regiment, fell in with the beast, and rode at full speed towards it. When first discovered it was one hundred and fifty yards distant, and fled into a hollow place, which was environed by marshes and water, and then they endeavoured to hunt it forth by dogs. They opened a fire upon it with their carbines; but as the rain was falling in torrents, all these flashed in the pan, save *one*, which went off without effect. "The rain," continues the report, which is not very flattering to M. le Comte's cavalry, "not only hindered (aid?) from coming to the troopers (the explosion of the carbine and their incessant cries of 'the beast! the beast!' having alarmed the whole neighbourhood), but by filling up the hollows with water, made them unable to stay any longer."

Three quarters of an hour after this the beast appeared in a field where tiles were made, at the base of Mont Mimat, where there is a hermitage dedicated to St. Privat, partly hewn out of the rock. This was then inhabited by an aged recluse and an officer of artillery, a reformed *roué*, who had dwelt with him for eighteen months, by way of penance. From the window they could plainly see the beast gambolling playfully on the grass, and climbing up the trees like a squirrel; but being without arms, they shut and made fast the door of the grotto, near which it remained watching for half an hour. This time the officer employed in making a sketch of it, which next day he sent to the Bishop of Mende; and here, perhaps, we have the startling engraving which was produced by the Intendant of Alençon.

The Comte de Montargis forwarded this sketch to the Duc de Praslin, to whose office the people flocked in multitudes to behold it; but public opinion was divided as to whether the animal was a lynx or a bear; "but I am certain," adds the writer of the news, "that if it was brought to the fair of St. Germain, it would draw more spectators than the famous Indian bird."

This celebrated fair was then held in a large meadow contiguous to the ancient Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, and was the grand rendezvous of all the dissipated society of Paris, to whom its gaming-tables, booths, theatres, cafés, cabarets, formed a never-ending source of attraction.

In April the beast devoured a young woman of twenty, who was watching some cattle. After that event the country became quite deserted; though its preference for the fair sex seemed very decided, no men would work in the fields, herd the flocks, or go abroad, save in armed bands.

The *Brussels Gazette* of May records a new phase in the history of the beast. Of eighteen persons whom it had bitten, thirteen are stated to have died raving mad. One patient began to howl like a dog, on which he was bled copiously, and chained hand and foot. Endued with terrible strength, he burst his bonds, and raved about in wild frenzy, destroying everything that came in his way, until he was shot down by an officer with a double-barrelled gun, when attempting, with a crowbar, to break into a country-house near Broine where thirty persons had taken refuge from him.

About six in the evening of the 1st of May, the *Sieur Martel de la Chaumette*, whose château was at St. Albans, in the bishopric of Mende, perceived, from a window, an animal which he was certain could be no other than the wild beast of Gévaudan. It was in a grass meadow, seated on its hind legs, and was gazing steadfastly at a lad, about fifteen years of age, who was herding some horned cattle, and was all unaware of its vicinity and ulterior views. The *Sieur de la Chaumette* summoned his two brothers, and armed with guns they issued forth in pursuit of the animal, which fled at their approach.

The youngest overtook it in the forest, and put a ball into it at sixty-seven paces; it rolled over three times, which enabled the elder *Chaumette* to put in another ball at fifty-two paces, on which it fled, and escaped, losing blood in great quantities. Night came on, and the pursuit was abandoned; but next day the *Chaumettes* were joined by the *Sieurs d'Ennival*, father and son, and a band of hunters. Its trail and traces of blood were found, and followed for a great distance, but they tracked it in vain.

The *Sieur de la Chaumette*, who had slain a great many wolves, declared that the animal he had seen in the meadow was *not* one; but his description of its appearance coincided exactly with that given by the *Sieur Duhamel* of the 10th Light Horse, and with the sketch made by the military hermit of St. Privat. The *Chaumettes* were in great hopes that the two bullets had slain the monster; but on the day following, at five in the evening, at a spot five leagues distant from their château, it devoured a girl fourteen years of age, and the terror of the people increased, as the beast seemed to have a charmed life and to be almost bullet-proof.

The picked marksmen of fifty parishes now joined in the chase. Two remarkably fine dogs of the *Sieur d'Ennival* were so eager in the pursuit, that they left the hunt far behind, and, as they were never seen again, were supposed to have been killed and eaten. The society of the knights of St. Hubert, in the city of Puy, composed of forty men, joined in the crusade against this denizen of the wilds of Languedoc; but it was not until the end of September, 1765, that it was ultimately vanquished and slain by a game-keeper and the *Sieur Antoine de Bauterne*, a gentleman of Paris, who set out for Gévaudan on purpose to encounter it.

After a long, arduous, and exciting chase, through forest and over fell, on

bringing it to bay at fifty yards, he shot it in the eye. Mad with pain and fury, it was crouching prior to springing upon him, when his companion, M. Rheinhard, gamekeeper to Louis, Duke of Orleans (son of Philip, so long regent of France), by a single bullet, in a vital spot, shot it dead.

It was then measured and found to be five feet seven inches long, thirty-two inches high, and only one hundred and thirty pounds in weight. On the 4th of October, the Sieur de Bouterne, who was extolled as if he had been the victor of another Steenkirke or Fontenoy, arrived triumphantly in Paris, and had the honour to present it to the king; and then great was the astonishment and the disappointment of all who saw this animal—the terrible wild beast of Gévaudan, whose sanguinary career had for so many months excited such dismay there and wonder elsewhere—and found that it was only a wolf after all, and not a very large one!

Horace Walpole, fourth earl of Orford—the brilliant and witty Walpole of the famous Strawberry Hill and the *Castle of Otranto*—saw the carcass as it lay in the queen's antechamber at Versailles, and asserts that it was simply a common wolf. Its nature accounted for some of the peculiarities it exhibited during its ravages, as the wolf, according to Weissenhorn, destroys every other creature it can master, and, on a moderate calculation, consumes during the year about *thirty times* its own weight of animal substance; and to increase the list of its crimes, it has, he adds, in many instances, communicated hydrophobia to man.

JAMES GRANT.

### FIRDAUSI.

FIRDAUSI, justly styled the Homer of Persia, is known to us principally through his grand epic poem, the *Sháh-náma*, or Book of Kings; a legendary history of Persia from the remotest times. This book resembles the *Iliad* both in its vigorous style and in the veneration with which it is regarded by the people, of whose cherished traditions it treats. The passionate admiration of the Persians for Firdausi's poem is no doubt due to its thoroughly national character, no work being so free from that admixture of Arabic words and ideas which distinguishes all other Persian compositions: the Mohammedan element is also much less prominently brought forward here than elsewhere. The story of Firdausi's life, and of the circumstances which led to the compilation of the *Sháh-náma*, is an exceedingly interesting one. I have taken the following account chiefly from a Persian MS. of Daulat Shah's *Memoirs of the Poets*, in the *Bibliothèque Impériale* at Paris.

Abul Cásim Mansúr was born in the district of Toos in Khorássán about the year A.D. 932. Some say that he assumed the poetical name (*takballus*) of Firdausi from the circumstance that his father was superintendent of a garden called Firdaus, "Paradise," belonging to the governor of Toos; while others assert that the title was conferred on him by Sultan Mahmúd, in delight at some extemporary verses in praise of his favourite Ayáz. The only record of his earlier youth that we possess is, that he was of a very studious disposition, and delighted often to sit beside a stream that flowed

past his home, amusing himself with reading and the culture of that art which was destined to raise him to the highest pinnacle of fame. At his birth his father is said to have dreamed that he saw his son standing on the housetop, shouting aloud, whilst voices from all sides responded to his call. On the following morning he consulted Najib Uddin, a celebrated *ḡayurpólos*, who predicted the child's future poetical and world-wide reputation.

When Sultan Mahmúd of Ghazni came to the throne in A.D. 998, he expressed a desire to complete the great undertaking of his predecessor, namely, to arrange and versify the ancient historical records which had been collected during the preceding reigns. Ebn Mansúr had assigned this task to the poet Dakíkí, who was, however, assassinated by one of his own slaves before the work had reached the extent of a thousand verses. This event seems to have first suggested to Firdausi the idea of his grand work the *Sháh-náma*, which he pursued with great energy for some years, the materials being supplied from a Pehlavi treatise composed by his friend Mohammed Lashkari. Hearing subsequently that Sháh Mahmúd had committed seven parts of the ancient chronicles to as many poets for versification, Firdausi undertook a journey to Ghazni, in the hope of procuring a share in the monarch's patronage. The version of the story of Rustam and Sohráb, by the poet 'Ansari, had just gained the palm, and was then the theme of universal admiration at court. On his arrival at Ghazni he alighted at a garden where three of the seven poets were holding a convivial *al fresco* entertainment. In accordance with the free and easy etiquette of the East, which allows of a stranger joining a party without any other invitation than that of the tempting appearance of the viands themselves, he approached them with the intention of "making himself at home." The poets laureate, however, wishing to get rid of him without rudeness, informed him who they were, and told him that it was their custom to admit none to their society but such as could give proof of poetic talent, and imposed upon him as a test the task of completing an extemporary verse, of which each should furnish a line with the same rhyme. Firdausi accepted the challenge, and the three poets having previously agreed upon three rhyming words to which a fourth could not be found in the Persian language, 'Ansari began,

Thy beauty eclipses the light of the sun,

Farrakhi added—

The rose with thy cheek would comparison shun ;

Asjadi continued—

Thy glances dart forth from the graceful joshan,\*

And Firdausi, without a moment's hesitation, completed the *rubá'i*—

Like the lance of Gi-ú in his fight with Poshan.†

The poets asked for an explanation of this allusion, upon which Firdausi

\* *Joshan*, a sort of veil

† *Manind 'drizi tu máh nabáshad raushan,*  
*Manind rukhat gul nabwad dar gulshan,*  
*Mazdát guzar hamí kunad dar jáushan,*  
*Chu sanán i Gí-ú dar jang i Paushan.*



recited to them the battle, as described in the *Sháh-náma*, and delighted them with his eloquence and learning. It so chanced that Mahak, one of Mahmúd's officers, was present; he was so charmed with Firdausi that he took him to court, where his transcendent genius soon procured for him the patronage and esteem of the Sultan. The latter assigned him apartments in the palace, and intrusted him with the task of versifying the ancient records already mentioned, directing that he should receive one thousand miscals of gold for every thousand verses. From some unexplained cause, Firdausi preferred receiving his reward in one sum, on the completion of the work; a most unfortunate choice for himself, as it led to his subsequent downfall and miseries. Some time before the poem was finished (it cost him thirty years of labour, as he himself tells us,

After thirty years of toil  
My Persian brightens Persia's soil,\*)

a dispute arose between him and Mehmándi, one of \* Mahmúd's most influential courtiers. This person, by dint of misrepresentations and accusations against the poet of heresy and partiality for the fire-worshippers and Súfis, succeeded in prejudicing the Sultan's mind against him. The monarch's fanaticism and prejudice being thus aroused, he was easily induced to send him sixty thousand silver dirhems (2600*l.*), instead of the golden miscals he had promised. Firdausi was in the bath when the money arrived, and in a fit of indignation divided the gift between the messenger, the bath-keeper, and the man who served the sherbet; a most notable instance, on the part of an Oriental, of nasal abscission for the gratification of facial revenge. Syed Abdoolah, an esteemed friend of mine, and himself a Persian poet of considerable reputation, refers to this breach of faith in a very elegant *rubá'i* addressed to the late Maharájah of Putteála,

I am not a Firdausi of Toos, and yet thou  
Excellest in bounty the Ghaznavi lord;  
A purse for each verse thou hast given me now,  
He gave him but half of the promised reward.

On Firdausi's conduct being reported to Mahmúd, he ordered the poet to be trampled to death on the following morning by elephants; but in abject terror he threw himself at the Sultan's feet and obtained mercy. Filled, however, with rage and fear, Firdausi prepared for flight, having first given vent to his feelings in a spirited satire, of which the following is the commencement:—

Oh, Shah Mahmúd, though climes obey thy nod,  
If man thou fearest not, yet fear thy God!  
Full many a king has lived before thy time  
Greater than thee in state—in all save crime.  
These sought for nothing but a spotless fame;  
But love of lucre mars the mightiest name.  
Though heaven's high grace has set thee on the throne,  
Thou shalt not spurn my counsel's warning tone!

---

\* *Bastí ranj burdam darín sál st*  
*'Ajám zindah kerdám badín Parsí.*



Dost thou not know me one of sternest mould?  
 Dost thou not fear the bloody blade I hold?  
 Thou on my faith hast dared to cast a slur,  
 Me—me a lion, thou wouldst name a cur!  
 Men fain would prove me infidel or worse,  
 And say that heresy defiles my verse;  
 And sure no viler caitiff e'er was born  
 Than he whose soul religion's truths would scorn.  
 They lie! I serve my God and Prophet still;  
 Ay, though a tyrant would my life-blood spill!  
 Ne'er shall my soul from duty's path be led,  
 Not were thy sword uplifted o'er my head!  
 So! thou hast threatened me, that from my form  
 Thy beasts shall crush the streams of life-blood warm.  
 I fear thee not; my heart is pure, and bright  
 With 'Ali's glory and the Prophet's light.  
 Thou sayst "The Prophet's warnings I obey;"  
 Then this I tell thee—this is what they say:  
 If thou hast wisdom, intellect, and mind,  
 Thy friends in 'Ali and the Prophet find.  
 Mine be the blame should harm from hence accrue;  
 I counsel that myself will aye pursue.

This satire he confided to Ayáz, a great favourite with Mahmúd, and an intimate acquaintance of his own, with instructions to show it to the Sultan when he should have been gone long enough to avoid pursuit. After visiting various courts\* he at last reached Tabristan, where Nasir, the sovereign of the country, not only received him kindly, but sent a petition to Mahmúd interceding on the aged poet's behalf. Mahmúd, when the petition arrived, had just discovered some verses written by Firdausi, lamenting his disappointed hopes and unjust treatment. These circumstances combined to soften the Sultan's heart towards him, and he accordingly despatched a messenger to Toos, whither the poet had repaired, bearing not only a free pardon but also a magnificent present worthy of his genius. But the reparation was made too late; Firdausi, now a heart-broken, decrepit old man, while wandering through his native town heard a child lisping a verse from the satire above referred to—

Had Mahmúd's father been what he is now,  
 A crown of gold had decked this aged brow;  
 Had Mahmúd's mother been of gentle blood,  
 In heaps of wealth full knee-deep had I stood.†

\* During this exile, and while staying at the court of the Khalif of Baghdad, he composed a beautiful metrical version of the story of Joseph and Zuleikha, a subject also treated of in a masterly style by Jâmi and Amir Khossau. The book is extremely rare, but copies of it are to be found in the libraries of the British Museum and the Royal Asiatic Society.

† Mahmúd's father was a slave. The verse above translated runs as follows in the original:—

*Agar shâh râ shâh bûdi پدر,  
 Ba sar bar nihâdi merâ tâj i zer,  
 Wagar mâder e shâk bânî budî,  
 Merâ sim u sar tâ ba xânî budî.*

He was so affected by this proof of the universal sympathy with his sufferings that he went home, fell sick, and died.

The *Sháh-náma*, or Book of Kings, is a metrical history of Persia from fabulous times to the reign of Alexander the Great, who is made out to have been a brother of Darius himself. As may be expected of such a work, its merit consists rather in the perpetuation of legendary lore than in accuracy of historical detail. Like Homer, his great Greek parallel, Firdausi revels in descriptions of fierce and sanguinary battles, of dreaded demons slain, and countries freed from the ravages of destructive monsters by champions endowed with superhuman strength and prowess. His warriors enter into long parleys before engaging in conflict, in order to be mutually assured that their antagonists are worthy of their arms. Like the Grecian heroes, too, they are fond of blazoning forth their own deeds of daring—

From hastening hosts the dust up flew,  
And pale each warrior's visage grew.  
Where'er I raised my mace I left  
A hero there of life bereft;  
My steed with fury raged the while,  
And earth upheaved a bloody Nile.

The following legend will give a good idea of the "marvellous incidents on which Firdausi loves to dwell. It is the story of a combat between Rustam, the Persian Hercules, and a demon giant named 'Akwán Dev.

#### RUSTAM AND 'AKWÁN DEV.

Kai Khosrau sat in a garden bright  
With all the beauties of balmy spring;  
And many a warrior armour dight,  
With a stout kamand\* and an arm of might,  
Supported Persia's king.

With trembling mien and a pallid cheek,  
A breathless hind to the presence ran,  
And on bended knee in posture meek,  
With faltering tongue that scarce could speak,  
His story thus began :—

"Alack a day! for the news I bear  
Will like to the follies of fancy sound.  
Thy steeds were stabled and stalled with care,  
When a wild ass sprang from its forest lair,  
With a swift resistless bound ;

"A monster fell, of a dusky hue,  
And eyes that flashed with a hellish glow,  
Many it maimed and some it slew,  
Then back to the forest again it flew,  
As an arrow leaves the bow."

Kai Khosrau's rage was a sight to see.

"Now curses light on the foul fiend's head!  
Full rich and rare shall his guerdon be  
Whose stalwart arm shall bring to me  
The monster live or dead."

\* A lasso.

But the mail-clad warriors kept their ground,  
 And their bronzed cheeks were blanched with fear.  
 With scorn the Sháh on the cowards frowned :  
 "One champion bold may yet be found  
 While Rustam wields a spear !"

No tarrying made the son of Zál,  
 Small reck had he of the fiercest fray,  
 But promptly came at the monarch's call,  
 And swore that the monster fiend should fall  
 Ere closed the coming day.

The swift Rakush's sides he spurred,  
 And speedily gained the darksome wood ;  
 Nor was the trial for long deferred,  
 But soon a hideous roar was heard,  
 Had chilled a baser blood.

Then darting out like a flashing flame,  
 Traverse his path the wild ass fled ;  
 And the hero then with unerring aim  
 Hurl'd his stout kamand, but as erst it came,  
 Unscathed the monster fled.

"Now Khudá in Heaven," bold Rustam cried,  
 "Thy chosen champion deign to save !  
 Not all in vain shall my steel be tried,  
 Though he who my prowess has thus defied  
 Be none but 'Akván Dev."

Then steadily chasing his fiendish foe,  
 He thrust with hanger\* and smote with brand ;  
 But ever avoiding the deadly blow,  
 It vanished away like the scenes that show  
 On Balkh's delusive sand.

For full three wearisome nights and days  
 Stoutly he battled with warlike skill ;  
 But the demon such magical shifts assays,  
 That leaving his courser at large to graze,  
 He rests him on a hill.

But scarce can slumber his eyelids close,  
 Ere 'Akván Dev from afar espies ;  
 And never disturbing his foe's repose,  
 The earth from under the mound he throws,  
 And off with the summit flies.

"Now, daring mortal," the demon cried,  
 "Whither wouldst have me carry thee ?  
 Shall I cast thee forth on the mountain side,  
 Where the lions roar and the reptiles glide,  
 Or hurl thee in the sea ?"

"Oh, bear me off to the mountain side,  
 Where the lions roar and the serpents creep ;  
 For I fear not the creatures that spring or glide,  
 But where is the arm that can stem the tide  
 Or still the raging deep ?"

\* Persian *khinjār*, a short dagger.

He was so affected by this proof of the universal sympathy with his sufferings that he went home, fell sick, and died.

The *Shâb-nâma*, or Book of Kings, is a metrical history of Persia from fabulous times to the reign of Alexander the Great, who is made out to have been a brother of Darius himself. As may be expected of such a work, its merit consists rather in the perpetuation of legendary lore than in accuracy of historical detail. Like Homer, his great Greek parallel, Firdausi revels in descriptions of fierce and sanguinary battles, of dreaded demons slain, and countries freed from the ravages of destructive monsters by champions endowed with superhuman strength and prowess. His warriors enter into long parleys before engaging in conflict, in order to be mutually assured that their antagonists are worthy of their arms. Like the Grecian heroes, too, they are fond of blazoning forth their own deeds of daring—

From hastening hosts the dust up flew,  
And pale each warrior's visage grew.  
Where'er I raised my mace I left  
A hero there of life bereft ;  
My steed with fury raged the while,  
And earth upheaved a bloody Nile.

The following legend will give a good idea of the marvellous incidents on which Firdausi loves to dwell. It is the story of a combat between Rustam, the Persian Hercules, and a demon giant named 'Akván Dev.

#### RUSTAM AND 'AKVÁN DEV.

Kai Khosrau sat in a garden bright  
With all the beauties of balmy spring ;  
And many a warrior armour dight,  
With a stout kamand\* and an arm of might,  
Supported Persia's king.

With trembling mien and a pallid cheek,  
A breathless hind to the presence ran,  
And on bended knee in posture meek,  
With faltering tongue that scarce could speak,  
His story thus began :—

"Alack a day ! for the news I bear  
Will like to the follies of fancy sound.  
Thy steeds were stabled and stalled with care,  
When a wild ass sprang from its forest lair,  
With a swift resistless bound ;

"A monster fell, of a dusky hue,  
And eyes that flashed with a hellish glow,  
Many it maimed and some it slew,  
Then back to the forest again it flew,  
As an arrow leaves the bow."

Kai Khosrau's rage was a sight to see.  
"Now curses light on the foul fiend's head !  
Full rich and rare shall his guerdon be  
Whose stalwart arm shall bring to me  
The monster live or dead."

\* A lasso.

But the mail-clad warriors kept their ground,  
 And their bronzed cheeks were blanched with fear.  
 With scorn the Sháh on the cowards frowned :  
 "One champion bold may yet be found  
 While Rustam wields a spear !"

No tarrying made the son of Zál,  
 Small reck had he of the fiercest fray,  
 But promptly came at the monarch's call,  
 And swore that the monster fiend should fall  
 Ere closed the coming day.

The swift Rakush's sides he spurred,  
 And speedily gained the darksome wood ;  
 Nor was the trial for long deferred,  
 But soon a hideous roar was heard,  
 Had chilled a baser blood.

Then darting out like a flashing flame,  
 Traverse his path the wild ass fled ;  
 And the hero then with unerring aim  
 Hurl'd his stout kamand, but as erst it came,  
 Unscathed the monster fled.

"Now Khudá in Heaven," bold Rustam cried,  
 "Thy chosen champion deign to save !  
 Not all in vain shall my steel be tried,  
 Though he who my prowess has thus defied  
 Be none but 'Akwán Dev."

Then steadily chasing his fiendish foe,  
 He thrust with hanger\* and smote with brand ;  
 But ever avoiding the deadly blow,  
 It vanished away like the scenes that show  
 On Balkh's delusive sand.

For full three wearisome nights and days  
 Stoutly he battled with warlike skill ;  
 But the demon such magical shifts assays,  
 That leaving his courser at large to graze,  
 He rests him on a hill.

But scarce can slumber his eyelids close,  
 Ere 'Akwán Dev from afar espies ;  
 And never disturbing his foe's repose,  
 The earth from under the mound he throws,  
 And off with the summit flies.

"Now, daring mortal," the demon cried,  
 "Whither wouldst have me carry thee ?  
 Shall I cast thee forth on the mountain side,  
 Where the lions roar and the reptiles glide,  
 Or hurl thee in the sea ?"

"Oh, bear me off to the mountain side,  
 Where the lions roar and the serpents creep ;  
 For I fear not the creatures that spring or glide,  
 But where is the arm that can stem the tide  
 Or still the raging deep ?"

\* Persian *khinjar*, a short dagger.



Loud laughed the fiend as his load he threw,  
 Far plunging into the roaring flood ;  
 And loud laughed Rustam as out he flew,  
 For he fain had chosen the sea, but knew  
 The fiend's malignant mood.  
 Soon all the monsters that float or swim,  
 With ravening jaws down on him bore ;  
 But he hewed and he hacked them limb from limb,  
 And the wave pellucid grew thick and dim  
 With streaks of crimson gore.  
 With thankful bosom he gains the strand,  
 And seeketh his courser near and far,  
 Till he hears him neigh and he sees him stand  
 Among the herds of a Tartar band,  
 The steeds of Isfendiyár.  
 But Rustam's name was a sound of dread,  
 And the Tartar heart it had caused to quake ;  
 The herd was there, but the hinds had fled,  
 So all the horses he captive led  
 For good Kai Khosrau's sake.  
 Then loud again through the forest rings  
 The fiendish laugh and the taunting cry ;  
 But his kamand quickly the hero flings,  
 And around the demon it coils and clings  
 As a cobweb wraps a fly.  
 Kai Khosrau sat in his garden fair,  
 Mourning his champion lost and dead,  
 When a shout of victory rent the air,  
 And Rustam placed before his chair  
 A demon giant's head.

E. H. PALMER.

---

## SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

## XIX.

EVERY unaccountable wrong thing which took place in the village was so naturally attributed to Miss Luckin, that a trick which, like the hiding of the pocket-book in Miss White's box, combined stupidity and malice in large proportions, was off-hand laid to the charge of the fat, foolish, cunning, hateful girl that had fits. With a little effort, indeed, Mrs. White, goaded by her daughter's curiosity, called to mind an occasion upon which their little house had been left empty, with the outer door ajar, for a few minutes. It only remained to suppose that Miss Luckin had somehow, either at Professor Wyndham's lectures, or in the street, picked up the book, and, watching in her cat-like way for an opportunity till she found one, had at last thrown the spoil into Cherry's box, with a spitefully stupid notion that Cherry might get "taken up" for stealing somebody's money, and somebody's "handwriting." This last, the handwriting, was a thing which did not in the least stir the

curiosity of the sweet Amelia; she could scarcely read at all, and hated to exercise even the small amount of literary power that had been coaxed into her by bribes of nice eatables, which, added up together, would keep a garrison for a month. Amelia's notions of law and theft, and social machinery in general, were, of course, obscure; but she had seen, in a show, the "Maid and the Magpie," and "Richard Corder and Maria Martin, or the murder in the Red Barn;" and she had vague dreams (I will not loosely say she made, or even had, a picture in her mind, for common minds do not make dreams, or even readily receive pictures) of Cherry walked off to the station-house by a policeman, with her mother crying at her side. And this gave her quite as much, and quite as unalloyed pleasure as any picture of his wedding-day ever gave to the happiest lover that ever lived. It is useless mincing the matter, and saying smooth pretty things. The highest pleasure known to this inferior nature was the infliction of pain upon better natures, by the meanest and most roundabout methods.

The "piece of the own" was compared with the frock in which little Timothy had been discovered, and was found to correspond. The natural explanation of the loss and finding of the babe was, that the wretched woman who had charge of it had been out to a distance to see some acquaintance, and had got very drunk in returning. Then we may suppose she had sat down, heavy-headed, on a door-step; had tumbled and fumbled about the child, till she had come to treat it as a bundle, and positively tied its dress in a knot; then gone off into a tipsy sleep, then woke up and walked off as well as she could, forgetting all about it. As the baby was lost at a great distance from the woman's place of abode, and had been instantly picked up, as it befel, by Tomboy, who happened to be out that evening, the random inquiries which had been made after it, during the alarm and confusion of the mother's illness, had not hit the mark.

And now, alas, I am made to feel how unthriftly I have been of my space, though it was with the best intentions. It is too often the case that the fourth and fifth acts of a play "drag," but a story is usually hurried to a close. I can only say *my* reason is simple want of room, and that I am not huddling anything out of sight because "there are things too sacred to be described," and things which "may safely be left to the imagination of the reader." All this is true, but it is too bad to push it as far as the painter who, being commissioned to paint the crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrew emigrants, presented on his canvas nothing but sea and shore. "Why, where are the Israelites?" asked the patron. "All gone over sir," said the artist. "And where are the Egyptians?" "All drowned, sir."

Being sent for, express, to the Acacias, Captain Boldero got himself up with the nicest care, as to his linen, his outer attire, and his whiskers. He put some scent on his pocket-handkerchief, and longed for a camelia to place in his button-hole. He had been informed that Miss Russett wished to speak to him privately, and he looked forward with awe to being closeted with "a member of the fair sex, you know." He regretted that he had not the imposing manners of his brother Richard; reached the Acacias in a flutter, and almost ran away again, after he had knocked at the door.

He was received by the servant with an air of mystery and *empressment*. She walked as if on list slippers to announce his arrival. As she came half-way down stairs, and uttered a solemn "Walk up, Captain Boldero, if you please," his heart went pit-a-pat. He could not but be aware that two of the other servants were peeping at him through half-open doors. It flashed across his mind that the story of his family disgraces had in some way oozed out, and that he was going to be dismissed from the Acacias with ignominy.

His bewilderment was not lessened when he was shown into the library. Instead of finding Miss Russett all alone, he found Miss Russett, Mr. Bligh the clergyman, and Cherry with a child on her knee. The first two bade him a grave good morning; feeling like little embodied special providences. Cherry, however, who might have been excused for some such feeling, received him with a smile, which was as good as a cordial to him—at first.

But it soon became more familiar, more pointed, and less pleasant to the bashful Boldero. Cherry held up Timothy to him in a coaxing manner; she nodded; she—good heavens! did she wink at him? No—that was his fancy; but he suddenly discovered that Cherry had a most depraved countenance, and was a very designing woman.

"Take a seat," said Miss Russett, solemnly.

"Pray compose yourself," said the Rev. Mr. Bligh, scrutinising first *his* face and then Timothy's, as he thought. Mr. Bligh was a man who liked to "break" things to people; as a visiting clergyman, he had acquired a way of going round a subject, which, as it happened in this case, was no kindness to the person to whom something was to be broken.

"Do you know the face of that child?" asked Mr. Bligh, with an insinuating smile, and pointing with his pen at Timothy. Mr. Boldero broke into a cold perspiration; his teeth chattered; he could not compel his lips to frame a word.

"Tell the truth, don't be nervous, sir," interposed Miss White.

"Would you like a glass of sherry?" said Miss Russett, ringing the bell.

With the courage of despair, the bashful drillmaster, casting a glance of horror and dread at Miss White, got out the words—

"He's not like *me*."

"Oh!" said Miss Russett, "there *is* a family likeness, come!"

Just at that moment the servant entered with the wine. The captain swallowed a glass with the haste and the fury of a dipsomaniac in Sahara, and, glaring at Miss White as if she had been a noxious animal, with one wild imploring glance at Miss Russett, rushed from the room, down the stairs, and out of the Acacias, leaving the door to slam behind him as it might.

But, of course, another way of communicating with this timid gentleman was instantly put in action, and the filling in of the natural result I must, in this place, ask the reader to imagine for himself. In substance, the story is already told: it is only for want of room that I do not make him present at the meeting of the mother and the child; and for the same reason only that I omit here all the minor explanatory links of the chain of events.

## XX.

Mrs. Branch could scarcely say to herself that she had been left out in the winding up of the story of Timothy, and she certainly now saw "the hand of the Lord" where she had not discerned it before; but, still, the episode of the pie and the umbrella weighed upon her mind. It may not be quite easy, even for a willing imagination, to recognise any but grotesque elements of feeling in that lugubrious little story. A hungry man so madly proud that he will run the risk of starvation rather than come to terms with a poor old spectacled soul behind the counter of a small shop is nearly, if not wholly, as absurd as he is pitiable; and it is almost impossible for you and me to think pathetically of an umbrella. But Mrs. Branch was a different person. As material of poetry, or deep feeling, an umbrella or a pie was just as feasible an object in her mind as a rose or a rainbow. The three things which had dwelt upon her mind since the night in question—"that night," as the poor old lady would call it, with a tearful shake of the head—were, first, the awful hunger of the man, which it tore her heart in pieces only to remember; secondly, his "unsanctified pride," which filled her with grief for his soul; and, lastly, or mingled with it all, the shame and sorrow of being suspected of having offered unwholesome food to a starving wayfarer, who had overpaid her for good and wholesome food. Mrs. Branch could not forget his famine-struck face; her eyes filled with tears when it came across her; then she would send up a prayer for his "poor soul;" blame herself for her "carelessness" in serving doubtful food; wonder *how* great her sin had been; confess it, shake her head over it, and go to her Bible, and *Mason on Self-Knowledge*, for comfort. For literary excitement and entertainment she was chiefly dependent on Josephus, in whose *Wars of the Jews* she occasionally lost herself for an hour, or *Morisoniana*; *Memoirs of James Morison the Hygeist*, a book professing to give a particular account of Mr. Morison's discovery of his universal remedy, illustrated with a sketch of the "gummy substance" which had been for many years adhering to "Mr. Morison's cesophagus or gullet." This drawing Mrs. Branch used to study with marked attention.

But she could never go up into her bedroom without being reminded, by the umbrella, of the famine-struck man whom she had driven away (by her "carelessness") perhaps to death—which, as she believed, seeing he had evidently not undergone the "saving change" which alone could fit him for heaven, would be the gate of everlasting perdition. If she had been a little more watchful in attending to his request as a customer (his gentlemanly appearance had flustered her, but that was no excuse, she ought to have been "strong in the Lord") she might have refreshed his body—perhaps saved his life; and he might even have strayed into Zour the next day and been called under Mr. Embler's ministry. But this was not to be; there stood the mournful-looking umbrella in a corner, against the wall, laid up like the pot of manna for a remembrance; and many a time would the poor old soul take it up, and shake her head over it, and stroke it in a vague musing way, as if it were a domestic animal. If she could only see the hand of the Lord in the whole story!

I hope I am not now conveying any impression verging upon one of caricature; for nothing could be more serious and sincere than the deep-seated humanity of a nature like this poor untaught woman's. If it were not for the fact that this kind of wide-reaching affectionateness of disposition—the tenderness which is so much rarer a thing than kindness, which includes kindness as the heavens lie round the earth, and inasmuch above it—was in her case impregnated with deep, though grotesque, religious feeling—which led her systematically, or rather almost automatically, to “take everything to the Lord”—there would be a kind of animal simplicity about it which it would be difficult to make morally beautiful. Thus, the gregariousness of a man like Jack Evans is not beautiful; it is simply a lively and tolerable sight; just like that form of parental affection (most frequently exhibited in the mother) which almost compels the observer to think of the parent as a bear or a whale, and the child as a cub.

One afternoon, in the latter part of May, when the weather was hot, the umbrella being still unclaimed by Mr. Richard, a middle-aged lady dropped into the little pastry shop, and sitting down hastily, with some appearance of heat and fatigue, upon the one chair, asked for a bottle of lemonade. When she had drunk some of it, and seemed to be a little refreshed, she happened to say she had left her parasol somewhere.

Mrs. Branch listened, said “h'm,” and hesitated. A parasol was a piece of “fashionable” vanity which she never thought of indulging in. If she had had one, she would have offered to lend it to the lady; but she had feminine weakness enough to be unwilling to confess that she had nothing of the kind in the house. She was a woman who would almost give away her head if she thought it would help another. At last she spoke—

“I have got a Chinese parasol—I *think* it's Chinese.”

“Chinese?” said the lady, smiling.

“Yes, ma'am; it looks as if it was all made of small shells, and it doesn't shut up; you would not like to use that, I think; it would look particular in the streets.”

“I think it would,” replied the lady, laughing outright.

“My son Tom brought it with him from the Indies,” Mrs. Branch continued, laughing herself with all the simplicity of a child. “I've got two umbrellas in the house, but they are both rather large for a lady's use; and one is not my own.”

A vague idea floated through Mrs. Branch's mind that it would be much better for this lady to sink the question of fashion, just as she would have done herself—she might have a sunstroke! Would not any human being rather carry an umbrella than have a sunstroke? She quitted the shop, and speedily returned with two gaunt umbrellas, one of them being her own, the other being the melancholy relic of the wet night. Her design, only half formed, however, was to press her own upon the lady, urging her to be sure and return it, or otherwise she might be tempted to use the one that was not her own. She laid them both upon the counter, preparatorily to speaking out what was in her mind.

But her good-natured little plan was dispensed with. The lady fixed her



eye upon a narrow slip of tarnished gold let into the handle of the stranger's umbrella, and asked, short and sharp,

"Where did you get this old family umbrella?"

Mrs. Branch shook at the knees; but she had the discretion to ask why the lady wanted to know

"There's some property . . ." said the lady; "look at this crest . . . we've advertised, and he never answered."

And here, again, the little story is told, though in skeleton. Of course there was no difficulty, now, in communicating with the owner of the umbrella; and though this solution of Mrs. Branch's puzzle seems commonplace and mean to you and me, it did not seem so to her. The owner of the umbrella had refused to answer any of the advertisements because he had reason to suppose that the object in view was an old and unwelcome one, that of buying off him and his expectations (which were very remote), because he was "a disgrace to the family." But his character, his energies, and his prospects were now so broken, and his standing-place in the world so slippery, that his only chance of a tolerably peaceful life lay in having a competence brought to his hand. At all events, Mrs. Branch now readily enough saw "the hand of the Lord" in this prosaic sequel to a prosaic though pathetic episode.

## XXI.

It is with no cynical *arrière-pensée* that I say Mr. Woods was not a model man; he would have been one if he could, and so he ought. Allow me to express a hope that you do not believe in any one model to which every man, however diverse in structure from other men, is bound in detail to conform, but that you do believe in a model in the light of which every separate man is bound to be his own best self. This faith is a very much wider, and, as I believe, higher thing than the faith which never gets beyond self-restraint and pattern-worship; but, though this last is the very poor faith of the majority of well-conducted people, it is at least an apology for a conscience, and, though quite incompatible with a high degree of spiritual *receptivity*, is usually found associated with considerable power of *believing* in things unseen. This may frequently work out into a sort of other-worldliness which is as foreign to a nature like that of Mr. Woods in one way as to that of a nature like Cherry's in another; and I believe it to have been the prevailing type at Zoar; but a man like Woods could never be at ease in any society of men and women which did not find the motive power (I do not mean the motive in the Bentham sense) of this life in another life. "The immortality of the soul, and all that sort of thing?" Yes, and much more; a man may live in and for another life who has never asked himself the question whether his soul is immortal or not.

But I was going to remind you that Woods was still young. The characteristic of his mind was hazy earnestness. About love-matters he had notions at once very intense and very vague. Everything that was great and beautiful spoke to him, if it spoke at all, as from a burning bush; he came not near, he saw not clear. There was plenty at Zoar to displease, not to say disgust him; but he saw through a haze. Was he not writing a great

poem?—at least not writing it exactly, but intending to write it? Yes, indeed, he was; and I can tell you he lived pretty much up in the air for a practical man. As for Cherry, of course a handsome romp like her pleased him at first as being half a child, and then, by the force of contrast, as a fresh, free, careless, beautiful creature, that always seemed to fall on its feet, and had the peculiar moral loveliness which attaches to unthinking goodness of heart. Whether there was an affinity or not, there was an attraction; and Zoar saw it and shuddered. As usual, it was very much beforehand, and might have made mischief at a time when no mischief was, otherwise, in the making. But some trouble was saved by the sudden departure of Miss White from Shoemakers' Village. Nothing would induce Mr. Richard to go and see Mrs. Branch; he had far too bitter a recollection of that wet, rainy night; but he wrote her a letter of exoneration about the pie, and requested her to do him the honour of keeping the umbrella. He immediately retired to his little property, a house with orchard and meadow-land, on the borders of Hopshire, taking with him his wife and child of course, with his brother the captain, and immediately inviting Miss White to stay as long as she pleased. Perhaps on other terms Timothy would have been unmanageable; at all events, she went: and how I should like to describe the little homestead, as well as the delight and the intellectual and moral shock, for the better, which her new life in this quiet green nest communicated to her whole nature! But I must here content myself with saying that she began to grow, both in mind and body, with an *élan*, with an *essor* (how I wish I might always write in word-mosaic!), which could not well be shown unless I were to print one or two of the letters which, about this time, this fair young creature wrote to Mr. Woods. If you have studied the physiology of the romp or gipsy type of womanhood, and even if you have not, you will be aware that her *élan* did not take the shape of writing to him first—no, but it cannot be concealed that before Miss White had been in the country a month, young Mr. Woods began to feel inclined to communicate with her. With the usual indiscretion of mothers, Mrs. White let fall one day, in the porch of Zoar, in answer to a question from Mr. Woods, that Cherry was not well. It was a trifle, but Woods magnified it in the haze of his thoughts, and turned red, not without a heart-beat. Remember, again I say, how young he was! But ought I to be more ashamed for him; for myself who apologise for him; or for those who, I know, will in their inmost hearts—by which I mean the place where the worm has gnawed a hole—expect the apology? Answer for me, fair souls on whom is the dew of your youth, in the promise of the morning.

That Sunday night Mr. Woods wrote a letter to Miss White; not, to adopt Miss Russett's description, a love-letter, but a letter of love. I am bound to say that Cherry had more self-consciousness in this case than he had; she took two days to consider before answering it, but she did answer—in words which appeared to the teacher a little cold and guarded. Then, the correspondence, thus commenced, went on, and, as letter after letter came, Cherry's guardedness wore off. Towards the end of August she sent the young man a forget-me-not. Pretty lamb, she did not think much of it; but he did.

I have often wondered that the post-office counter, especially in half-retired, gossiping districts, is not the source of more disclosures than it is. It so happened that our old friend Mr. Foat, going to the post-office to post a letter from Fanny to her friend in Hopshire, cast his eye upon a few of the letters which the rather stupid postmistress was stamping and tying up; and it also happened that Miss Luckin was behind him or at his side. Mr. Foat who, as a bill-discounter, was some judge of handwritings, made a playful clutch at one of the letters.

"The property of the Queen, if you please," said the postmistress, playfully reclaiming it and passing it on with the rest.

"I thought I knew the writing; that's all," said Mr. Foat, innocently. And indeed he did; the worst was that Miss Luckin knew it too, poor as was her diagnosis in all such matters. "Miss White, care of R. Boldero, Esq., Hazelton, Hopshire"—there was no mistaking that; and Amelia was now woman enough to draw large inferences from this one new fact added to what she already knew.

## XXII.

In the end of September and early days of October came heavy rains, and Cherry returned home. So much was she altered, that, quite apart from the deeper colouring which the kisses of the sun and the playfulness of the winds had left upon her cheeks, some of her less familiar friends might well have looked twice before addressing her by name. Stouter she was not; though she was more evenly rounded; so the change was not there. Was it in her hair? That, indeed, *was* altered! Still the crisp curls ran like a sunny creeping plant all round the back of her head, scarcely disclosing her little ears, and then climbing wantonly up to her temples. But these small, crisp curls were now a mere undergrowth, and her hair, distinctively her *hair*, that which is given to a woman for a crown and a glory, was grown so long that, shaken out, it would fall down her sides to a little below her waist. Yet the great change was not in her hair, even. The softness, the repose, the breadth, the breathing-space, the wide horizons of the country life had made good their way into her very being—for a time at least, and with so much certainty of effect that she could never again cease growing, in heart and soul I mean;—even if it had not been for the letters. Ah, the letters! The words were as simple as the air, the pledges were as vague as all heaven, and they were intended to be as cool as a river. But the courses of the pure water were streaked with wandering lights and flames as of a fragrant oil that had dropped burning from a censer, and now ran along the ripples whither it would. Which of the two gave or received most, the youth or the maiden, it is not mine to tell. A youth and a maiden meet. It seems to each that the other has lifted the curtain from a world unseen before. Has each seen the *same* mystery behind the lifted veil? The night passes, and we see the world with all her mysteries of sea, meadow, fruit, and living creatures. The day passes into night, and all the fires of heaven and the mysteries of infinite darkness are uncovered. Day unto night uttereth knowledge; but the secret is not yet told.

## XXIII.

The very first person, after her mother, that Cherry went to see, and that was within three hours after she had set her foot in the village, was Mrs. Branch. I pass over the embraces, and the glee, and the tears—for the old lady's eyes were quick to moisten though slow to run over; but I cannot spare you Cherry's sudden flashing back of her old self, or Mrs. Branch's momentary lapse into poetry. The old girl could not quite make the sun-browned beauty out. She cocked her head aside, and stroked the long curls till they fell, then did them up again, as if they had been tassels of silk to a king's canopy. She gazed; wiped her glasses; rested her hands on the counter; she smiled, and smiled, and rubbed the tip of her handsome nose; and at last she spoke:—

"I can't think what you put me in mind of, my dear. Clusters of grapes from Eshcol? No, no! H'm! come again bringing his sheaves with him? No, that's not it. H'm! a heap of wheat, set about with lilies. That's it! No, it isn't. H'm! My dear!"—with a spurt—"you look like sheaves of wheat and a ripe orchard melted into a young woman!" And the only fault I see in this poetic speech of Mrs. Branch, of Zoar, is the improper use of the word "melted." But she soon came down to very flat prose, when, after a few words upon indifferent topics, she recommenced thus,—

"I think, my dear, it would not be a bad thing if I was to"—then, shaking her spectacles at Cherry—"you don't know, Miss White, how the boys have chivied me about that pie, ever since it happened. Of course it got about; and they've been calling out after me, and coming into the shop; yes, dear, and saying, 'There you go with your pie!'" And the old lady shook her head again.

Cherry felt inclined to laugh, of course. She asked, rather wickedly,

"Did they say anything else, Mrs Branch?"

"Only some bad word that I didn't understand. But, dear me, boys will be boys, I suppose. They must have their joke while they're young."

"Was it 'Lu-ra-li-ety!' that they said?"

"Dear, yes; that was it. How natural you do it, to be sure. Ah, you'd have made a fine man, Cherry."

"Oh, don't talk such nonsense, pray; I'm very glad I'm a woman."

"Are you?" said Mrs. Branch, incredulously scanning the fresh soft face, and transparent large eyes. She was holding Mr. Richard's letter to her side in a meditative way. She said in a half whisper to Cherry,—

"It strikes me, my dear, that if I was to take out the ginger-beer and lemonade bill, and put this letter into the frame, it would stop the boys chivying me any more when they see it in the shop-window."

As Cherry stooped down, and pretended to adjust her *chaussure*, it is not uncharitable to presume that she laughed: but she lifted up in a moment a quite serious countenance.

"But you see, Mrs. Branch, you couldn't show both sides of the paper; half the letter would be gummed down."

"So it would; yes; how quick you are; I never thought of *that*, now."

said Mrs. Branch, laughing innocently, as if *that* was the joke. Cherry, sorely troubled with suppressed fun, took the opportunity as it came, and laughed heartily. Mrs. Branch laughed again, in the simplicity of her heart, and all was again clear in her little atmosphere of thought.

"It's only the boys' nonsense, Mrs. Branch," resumed Cherry; "they don't really mean they think you make bad meat-pies."

"I'm sure I *don't*; that's one thing. But if they did mean it, what does it matter? The days of my pilgrimage are nearly over, my dear."

"Oh, don't say that, Mrs. Branch—you'll see Tom's children before you die, you may depend upon it."

But the old lady only shook her head, and murmured, half to herself:—

Here in the body pent,  
Absent from Thee I roam;  
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent  
A day's march nearer home.

Mrs. Branch was now ten thousand miles away in meditation: she gently shook her head, and, waving Cherry away, said:

"Good-bye, dear, good-bye! God bless you!"

And when the young girl had fairly passed out of the shop, and she could only dimly discern her back through the misty goggles, the words of the patriarch came to her mind, and forced themselves pathetically through her lips, with only the necessary change of the pronoun—

"Yea, and she *shall* be blessed," said Mrs. Branch, excitedly.

Outside the shop, Amelia Luckin was waiting for Cherry, and asked her there and then to take a walk across the fields.

"I want to get back to mother," said Cherry, with an indescribable fresh shrinking from this acquaintance.

"I must speak to you very particular," said Amelia; "perhaps you don't know something—it's about Mr. Woods." Cherry blushed, and, with a feeling as near disgust as it was in her to entertain towards any one in even a caricature of the human form, she consented to the walk. The whole conversation, such as it was, I can guess; some of it I know; and the cruel cross-examination which a creature like this malignant epilept, burning with the basest and most stupid form of jealousy, would inflict upon a girl like Cherry, whose very frankness would baffle her, is not difficult to conceive in the lump, at all events. As the two young women approached the pond, a farm-servant, who was busy on a haystack, saw Amelia Luckin pause, as if asking a decisive question. He neither heard the question nor the answer, of course; but he saw Amelia rush to the swollen pond and jump in, yelling aloud as she did so. Not thinking how deep the pond now was, not thinking at all, indeed, and certainly not of the oozy, muddy bed of the water, Cherry leaped in to save Amelia, and clutched at her. For a minute, the man was like one drunk or dazed—a precious, irrecoverable minute. The two girls were got out of the water, or rather out of the mud, and after some time Amelia was found not to be dead. But Cherry had spent the last effort of her kind arms, and the last wave of her sweet breath in trying to recover her only enemy—a creature, moreover, who, upon any conceivable computation of value, did not



appear to be worth preserving in life by the lifting of a hand, if a lifted hand would save her.

When Mr. Woods, quite unaware of Cherry's return to the village, though expecting her shortly, got home that afternoon, he found a letter from Mr. Foat, marked *private and confidential* (inside and out), warning him, as a brother in the Lord, against making shipwreck of his faith upon "the carnal rock of being unequally yoked together." But when Cherry's dead body was borne through the village on a door, past the shop of Mr. Foat, and he saw her, I must do him the justice to say that he turned ill. You would call me coarse if I were to say specifically how the sight affected him; but it is, for all that, one of the best things I know of the man. He was scarcely able to be present at her funeral; but he was there, though she was laid in the churchyard. The other good thing that I know of Mr. Foat is that when Fanny, who was of course there too, burst into tears when the earth dropped upon the coffin, and, clinging to his waist, sobbed out, "Oh! father, let us always love each other!" he took her up in his arms, and sealed the compact with ten thousand kisses.

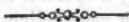
Of Mr. Woods I shall here say no more. Strange to say, within a short time of these events, it had become known at Zoar that the cloud was lifted from the spirit of old Mr. Embler. A preacher who was said to be doing wonders in Lancashire, "winning souls by the dozen," was Cartwright's phrase, "not standing-room, wherever he preaches!" and was known as "The young Boanerges of the North," had just written to Mr. Embler to tell him that he had been called "under his ministry at Zoar Meeting-house."

The flowery young preacher who now occupied that pulpit, with more discernment and sensibility than I had ever given him credit for, immediately preached a sermon in which he pointed out that there were more ways than one in which "the hand of the Lord," might be "seen" sooner or later; but that it was not to be forced into visibility by any exorcisms of the understanding. Mrs. White and Mrs. Branch were both much affected; as well as Embler's enemies of the old days. But when Mr. Morlock went off to the witch of Endor for an illustration, he overdid his work. Mrs. Branch was made very unhappy by it, and began to suffer more in the way of self-rebuke for having earnestly desired to "see the hand of the Lord" in her own little trouble than the majority of human beings who have been guilty of wrong things suffer in the whole course of their lives.

Mr. John Evans carried off Mrs. Padbury from Zoar, married her, and drank away every penny of her little property. In want, squalor, forlornness, and self-condemnation, I do not doubt that her soft, confiding nature (the silliness I allow) is as little altered as her harmless rabbit-face. If I meet Jack Evans to-morrow, he will "God bless" me, and "dear fellow" me; and patronize me, and talk up Moore and Byron just as he used to do—I am sure of it.

It seems trivial to refer to so small a matter as the solitary organ-note which Cherry heard on the night of her dream at the Acacias; but the explanation has, I dare say, been guessed. On her way to Cherry's room, the stupid Amelia had paused before the instrument, which happened to be left

open. It had been played late at night, and a little air remained in the bellows. Miss Luckin knew that usually it made no noise unless some one was pumping air into it, and out of mere stupid wantonness touched one of the keys. The solitary sound from the bass made her start, but she did not lay aside her purpose, as we have already seen. The death of Cherry White and her own immersion together caused, of course, a shock even to a system like hers. She had repeated "epileptic" fits—so they always called them, but I have my doubts of the diagnosis—for some weeks; then ceased to have any at all; and became at once more lucid, and gloomily devout—in such way as she was capable of. My anticipation is that she will end her days in a cell of some half Protestant convent; and my reason for that anticipation is briefly this: I think there is a faint, feeble turning to the light in her; that movement could only, as I believe, be kept alive in the presence of certain overwhelming external associations, and under the severest discipline; and in that direction some mysterious instinct takes that poor, stunted, mysterious nature of hers.



## FLOWERS IN THE EAST WIND.

PITIFUL, tender, sweet,  
 With the dumb, bound woe,  
 With the stems that stoop, and the leaves that droop—  
 Why should they suffer so?  
 Bitterness hasteth, fleet,  
 'Tis the south wind waits;  
 While the fragrance dies, and the dead bud lies  
 Close at our garden gates.  
 Oh, for a little space,  
 Just the spot you tread,  
 Where a flower might grow into beauty, so  
 Crowning the storm-bent head.  
 How can you tell what grace  
 With a young thing dies?  
 What the world may lose, while the doctors choose  
 Which way the danger lies?  
 Slowly, with heavy feet,  
 Do the great ones go;  
 While they try the right, and obey dull might,  
 Doing not what they know.  
 Pitiful, human, sweet,  
 Oh little children's eyes,  
 With the marks of weeping, and lack of sleeping—  
 Woe for us when ye rise!

S. A. D. I.

## HINTS FOR YOUNG LADIES.

FOR 1867.

IT'S hardly the thing to be witty

If you are decidedly young ;

A girl may be charmingly pretty

And yet have the deuce of a tongue.

Sharp answers are rather enraging,

When uttered with piquancy cool ;

A girl may be sweetly engaging,

And make a man look like a fool.

To women who hunt and are horsey

(All feminine softness forgot)

A well-behaved man may be saucy—

He's surely a spoon if he's not ;

They fancy it very delightful

To strike out a path of their own ;

But the world is uncommonly spiteful,

And never will let them alone.

So, though I don't wish to be rude, dears,

To you—by the slangy called "fast ;"

Though often the first to be wooed, dears,

You'll find that you're married the last !

Your sentiment 's rather too gushing,

Your wit is a little too free ;

And women who understand blushing

Men like for their wives, don't you see ?

To try by your airs to outdo men

Is really a wonderful plan ;

The loudest and fastest of women

Would make such a very slow man !

And 'twould be the same with us men, dears,

If we tried this mimicry poor ;

We should be as ridiculous then, dears :

What girls we'd make, to be sure !

Then do not consider it vexing

Your lives are such different things ;

And never attempt an unsexing—

Sure queens are as royal as kings !

You soon would find out what distress is,

Without *his* strong arm and advice ;Without *your* quick wit and caresses,*He* wouldn't find life half so nice,

HURDY GURDY.

## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

### PART II.—HIS YOUTH.

#### CHAPTER XII.

##### SHARGAR'S ARM.

NOT many weeks passed before Shargar knew Aberdeen far better than most Aberdonians. He had a great faculty for knowing places. From the Pier-head to the Rubislaw Road, he knew, if not every court, yet every thoroughfare and short cut, and found himself at home. And Aberdeen began to know him. The Aberdonians may or may not be the lost ten tribes, but they can recognize an honest man when they have opportunity. And Shargar was very soon recognized as trustworthy, and had pretty nearly as much to do as he could manage. Hence it came about, that although Dr. Anderson had reflected on the difficulty of finding Shargar when he wanted to put a job in his way, Shargar could have told at almost any hour where Dr. Anderson was to be found. And if he lingered occasionally about the doctor's carriage—for the good man practised a little among the poor of the place, and among the poor only—it is to be excused, seeing he always kept out of the doctor's way, and ran the faster for the rest of his mission.

One day as he was hurrying through the Green (*a non viiendo*) on a message from the Rothieden carrier, that is, bearing a hamper to its destination, he came upon the said carriage in one of the narrowest streets, and, as usual, paused to contemplate the equipage and get a peep of the owner as he came out of a greengrocer's at whose door it stood. The morning was very sharp. There was no snow, but a cold fog, like vaporized hoar-frost, filled the air. It was weather in which the East Indian could not venture to go out on foot, although a stair would have led him from Union Street into these abysses far sooner than he could drive round by any of the inclined planes that led to them. And his horses apparently liked the cold as little as himself. They had been moving about restlessly for some time, and when the doctor got in and shut the door, one of them reared and the other began to haul on his traces, eager for a gallop. The consequence was that the pole swerved round under the fore legs of the rearing horse, and inextricable confusion would have been the consequence, for the old coachman was all but helpless in the emergency, had not Shargar rushed from the shelter to which he had betaken himself as he saw the doctor come out, and more from instinct than knowledge—only he had always haunted the Boar's Head, and did not regard horses as wild beasts—sprung at the bit of the rearing horse, and dragged him off the pole over which he was just going to cast his near leg. As soon as his feet touched the ground he too pulled, and away went the chariot and down went Shargar.

"Oh Lord!" cried Shargar, as he rose with his arm dangling by his side, "what will Donal' Joss say? Faith I'm like to swarf (*faint*). Haud awa' frae that basket, ye wuddyfous" (*withy-fowls, gallows-birds*), he cried, darting towards the hamper he had left in the entry, which was now surrounded by a few of the poor little dirt-beetles that some of their beautiful sisters would so enjoy washing and kissing if they had but the courage to try it, or didn't prefer dogs—because they won't have to account for their souls, I suppose. "Haud awa'!" cried Shargar; but just as he reached the hamper he staggered and fell. Nor did he know anything more till he found the carriage stopping with himself and the hamper inside it.

As soon as they could turn, they had driven back to see how the lad had fared, for the doctor had felt the carriage go over something. They found him lying beside his hamper, got both in, and as a preliminary measure proceeded to deliver the latter.

"Whaur am I? whaur the deevil am I?" he cried, jumping up and falling back again.

"Don't you know me, Moray?" said the doctor, for he felt shy of calling the poor boy by his nickname: *he* had no business to do so.

"Na, I dinna ken ye. Lat me awa'. I beg yer pardon, doctor, I thocht ye was ane o' thae wuddyfous rinnin' awa' wi' Donal' Joss's basket. Eh me! sic a stoun' i' my airm! But naeboddy ca's me Moray. They a' ca' me Shargar. What richt hae *I* to be ca'd *Moray*?" added the poor boy, feeling. I almost believe for the first time, the stain that lay upon his birth. And yet he had as good a right before God to be called *Moray* as any other son of that worthy sire, the Baron of Rothie included. And possibly the trumpet-blowing angels called him *Moray*, or something better.

"The coachman will deliver your parcel, Moray," said the doctor, this time repeating the name with emphasis. "Sit still."

"Deil a bit o' t!" cried Shargar. "He daurna' lea' his box wi' thae deevils o' horses. What gars ye keep sic horses, doctor? They'll play some mischeef some day."

"Indeed, they've played enough already, my poor boy. They've broken your arm."

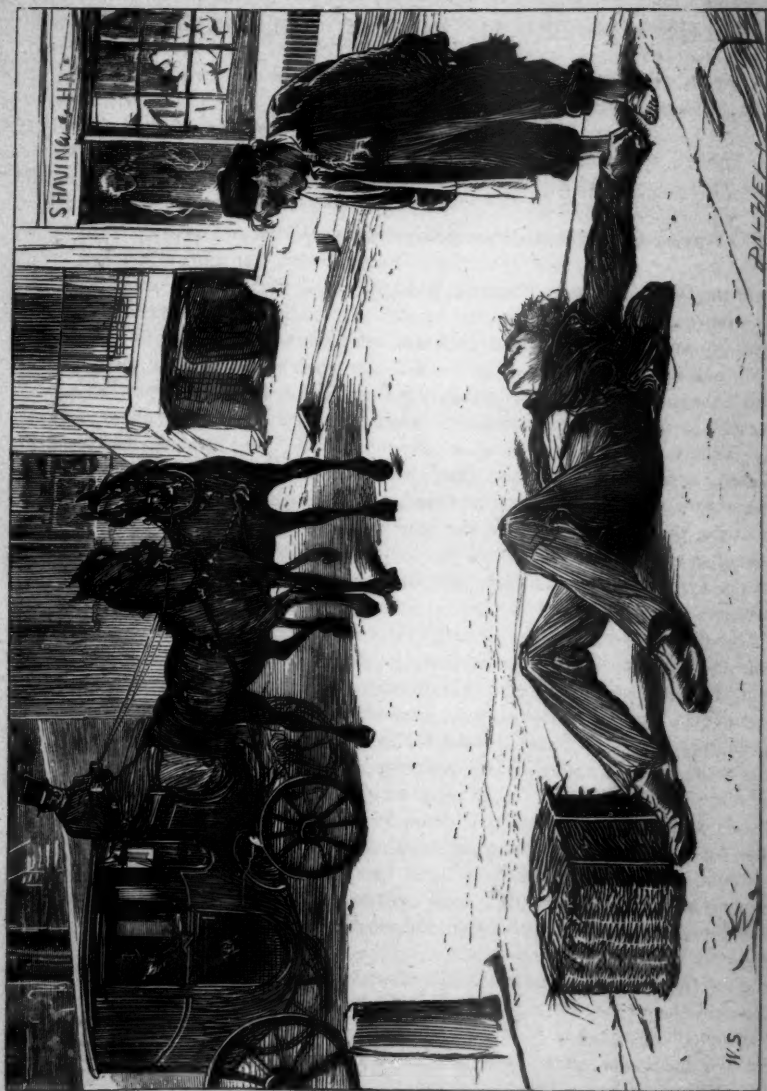
"Never min' that. That's no muckle. Ye're welcome, doctor, to my twa arms for what ye ha dune for Robert an' that lang-leggit frien' o' his—the Lord forgie me—Mr. Ericson. But ye maun jist pay him what I canna mak' for a day or twa, till 't jines again—to haud them gaein', ye ken.—It winna be muckle to you, doctor," added Shargar, beseechingly.

"Trust me for that, Moray," returned Dr. Anderson. "I owe you a good deal more than that. My brains might have been out by this time."

"The Lord be praised!" said Shargar, making about the first profession of Christianity he had made in his life. "Robert 'll think something o' me noo."

During this conversation the coachman sat expecting some one to appear from the shop, and longing to pitch into the "camstary" horse, but not daring to lift his whip beyond its natural angle. No one came. All at once Shargar knew where he was.





"ROBERT FALCONER."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

WALLER

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

"Guid be here! we're at Donal's door. Guid day to ye, doctor; an' I'm muckle obleeged to ye. Maybe gin ye war comin' oor gait, the morn, or the neist day, to see Maister Ericson, ye wad tie up my airm, for it gangs wallop in' aboot, an' that canna be guid for the healin' o' 't."

"My poor boy! you don't think I'm going to leave you here, do you?" said the doctor, laying one hand on the hamper, and proceeding to open the carriage-door with the other.

"Tak' care, sir; tak' care. William Walker said there was a jar o' drained hinney i' the bit basket; an' the bairns wad miss 't sair gin it was spult."

"I'll take good care," returned Dr. Anderson.

He delivered the basket, returned to the carriage, and told the coachman to drive home.

"Whaur are ye takin' me till?" exclaimed Shargar. "Willie hasna payed me for the parcel."

"Never mind Willie. I'll pay you," said the doctor.

"But Robert wadna like me to tak' siller whaur I did nae wark for 't," objected Shargar. "He's some pernicky—Robert. But I'll jist say 'at ye garred me, doctor. Maybe that 'll saitisfee him. And faith! I'm queer aboot my left fin here."

"We'll soon set that all right," said the doctor, leading the way into his little surgery, where he put the broken limb in splints. He then sent Johnson to help the patient to bed, for he would not hear of his going home till his arm was well.

"But what *will* Robert say?" were Shargar's last words, as he fell asleep, appreciating, no doubt, the superiority of the bed in which he now was to his usual lair upon the hearthrug.

Dr. Anderson himself carried the news to Robert, who was delighted to hear how well Shargar had acquitted himself. And then they held a small consultation together about him; for this occurrence had brought to a point the doctor's intentions concerning the outcast, and he told Robert that as soon as his arm was sound, he should go to the grammar-school, and next year follow him to the college.

"He has plenty of courage," said the doctor, "and that is a fine thing."

"Ow ay," answered Robert; "he's no ill aff for smeddum (*spirit*), gin it be for any ither body. But he wad never lift a han' for himsel'; an' that's what garred me tak' till him sae muckle. He's a fine crater. He canna gang him lane, but he'll gang wi' onybody, and haud up wi' him."

"What do you think he will be fit for?"

Now Robert had been building castles for Shargar out of the hopes which the doctor's friendliness to the poor boy had given him. Therefore he was ready with his answer.

"Gin ye cud ensure him no bein' made a general o', he wad mak' a gran' sojer. Set 's face foret, and say 'quick mairch,' an' he'll ca his bagonet throu auld Hornie. But lay nae consequences upo' him, for he cudna stan' unner them."

Dr. Anderson laughed, but thought none the less, and went home to see how his patient was getting on.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## MYSIE'S FACE.

MEANTIME Ericson grew better. A space of hard, clear weather, in which everything sparkled with frost and sunshine, seemed to do him good. But he could not yet use his brain. He turned with dislike even from his friends Plato and Dante. He would sit in bed or on his chair by the fireside for hours with his hands folded before him and his eyelids drooping, and let his thoughts flow, for he could not think. And that his thoughts thus flowing at their will, flowed sometimes with sweet sounds over the stones of question, the curves of his lip testified to the friendly-furtive glance of the watchful Robert. None but the troubled mind knows its own consolations; and I believe that the saddest life has its own presence—however it may be unrecognized as such—of the upholding Deity. Doth God care for the hairs that perish from our heads? To a mind like Ericson's the remembered scent, the recurring vision of a flower loved in childhood, is enough to sustain anxiety with beauty, for the lovely is itself healing and hope-giving. To have such a presence is to be; and while a mind exists in any high consciousness, the intellectual trouble that springs from the desire to know its own life, to be assured of its rounded law and security, falls into abeyance.

But Ericson was always ready to help Robert in any difficulty such as would not unfrequently spring from his imperfect preparation in Greek; for while Mr. Innes was an excellent Latin scholar, his knowledge of Greek was too limited either to compel learning or inspire enthusiasm. And with the keen instinct he possessed in everything immediate between man and man, Robert would not unfrequently search for a difficulty in order to request its solution from Ericson, when he would invariably rouse himself and explain as few men could have explained; for where a clear view was to be had of anything Ericson either had it or knew that he had it not. Hence Robert's progress was good; for one word from a wise helper sometimes clears off a whole atmosphere of obstructions.

At length one day when Robert came home he found him seated at the table, with his slate, working away at the Differential Calculus, after which he grew better more rapidly, and before another week was over began to attend one class a day. He had been so far in advance before that though he could not expect prizes this session, there was no fear of his *passing*, if he had not a relapse. And of this there did not seem to be much danger now, though Robert could not help contemplating with some anxiety his return to the North, when he would no longer be able to minister to him; for in the weakness of well-doing he was willing to think himself essential to Ericson's well-being.

One day, after the morning class, he saw him in the quadrangle talking to an elderly gentleman. In the afternoon Ericson told him that that was Mr. Lindsay, and that he had asked them both to spend the evening at his house. Fortunately it was Friday, and he could easily spare the time, though he would have gone anywhere and at any hour that Ericson might wish.

When the evening came, Robert got out his Sunday clothes, and dressed himself with some anxiety, for he had been very little in other people's houses, and felt shy and doubtful of his deportment. He then sat down to his books till his friend should call him. When Ericson came to his door, he looked up and saw him as he had never seen him before—in a good suit of black, looking dressed and ceremonial—a stately, graceful gentleman. Renewed awe came upon Robert at the sight, and renewed gratitude to such a man for honouring him with his notice. There was a flush on his cheek, and a fire in his eye, and Robert had never seen him look so grand. But at the same time there was something about him that rendered Robert uneasy, he could not tell why—a look that made Ericson seem strange to him, as if his life lay all in some other region far from this. Weak as he still was, he would have walked from the house without any additional covering, had not Robert protested.

"Whaur are ye gaein' that gait, Mr. Ericson? Tak' yer plaid, or ye'll be laid up again, as sure's ye live."

"I'm warm enough," returned Ericson. "I want you to take your fiddle though."

"Hoots! Hoo can I do that? To tak' her wi' me the first time I gang to a strange hoose, as gin I thocht a'bady wad think as muckle o' my auld wife as I do mysel'! That wadna be mainners—wad it noo, Mr. Ericson?"

"But I told Mr. Lindsay that you could play well. The old gentleman is fond of Scotch tunes, and you will please him if you take it."

"That maks a' the differ," answered Robert. "I'll tak' her wi' me gin ye pit on yer plaid."

So the matter was arranged. But although Ericson had mentioned the violin to Mr. Lindsay, he did not tell either him or Robert why he wanted the latter to take it with him.

Ericson went to the episcopal church on Sundays. I do not know whether he had been brought up in the habit, or began to go because Mr. and Miss Lindsay went. At all events he sat where he could see Mysie, and when she was not there neither was he. And when there he longed and thirsted ever till the music returned. But the music he never heard; he only saw it transmuted into form, and never took his eyes off Mysie's face. Reflected in a changed echo from her countenance, he followed all its changes. Surely there never was one utterly powerless to produce music herself on whom music took such an effect. For she had no voice, and she had never been taught to play upon any instrument. Hence even in music all her feelings were pent up in her, and music swayed her more, raised more sudden storms upon the mobile lake of her being, than it would have done had she been able to relieve herself by any utterance, however feeble. The waves of her soul dashed the more wildly against their shores, inasmuch as those shores were precipitous, and afforded no outlet to the swelling waters. It was for the sake of letting his soul hover like a bird of Paradise over the lovely changes of her countenance, changes more lovely and frequent than those of an English May, that Ericson got Robert to take his violin.

When they got into the street, the last of the sunlight was departing, and



a large full moon was beginning to bloom through the fog upon the horizon. The sky was almost clear of clouds, and the air was cold and penetrating. Robert drew Eric's plaid closer over his chest. Eric thanked him lightly, but his voice sounded eager; and it was with a long hasty stride that he went up the hill through the gathering of the light frosty mist. He stopped at the stair upon which Robert had found him that memorable night. They went up. The door had been left on the latch for their entrance. They went up more steps between rocky walls. When in after years he was able to read the *Purgatorio*, as often as he came to one of the ascents to the next circle, this stair returned upon Robert's inner vision. At the top of the stair was the garden, still ascending, and at the top of the garden shone the glow of Mr. Lindsay's parlour through the red-curtained window. To Robert it shone a refuge from the cold night air—not that he heeded himself, but he was anxious about Ericson; to Ericson it was the casket of the richest jewel that the universe held. Well might the ruddy glow stream from that window to meet him! Only in glowing red could such beauty be rightly closed. With trembling hand he knocked at the door.

They were shown at once into the parlour, where Mysie was putting away her book, so that as the young men entered, her back was towards them. The room was dimly lighted, and when Mysie turned towards them, it seemed to Robert as if all the light in it came only from her eyes. But it had been all gathered out of that weary novel. She held out her hand to Eric, with the gentleness of her sweet voice made more gentle because he had been ill, and his face flushed still deeper at her tone. And now Robert began to know something more about Eric.

But although Mysie spoke kindly, and he was glad to be thus received, Ericson could not fancy that she showed him any special favour. Robert was dazzled by her beauty, and stood with his violin under his arm, feeling as awkward as if he had never handled anything more delicate than a pitchfork. But she sat down to the table, and began to pour out the tea, and he came to himself again. Presently her father entered, and his greeting was warm and mild and sleepy. He had come from poring over Spotiswood, in search of some will o' the wisp of his own fancy, and had grown stupid from want of success. But he revived after a cup of tea, and began to talk about the genealogies of some of the northern families; and Ericson did his best to attend to what he said. Robert, who although marvelling at Mysie's beauty was far more absorbed in Ericson, could not help wondering at the knowledge he displayed, even on such matters as those. This was accounted for afterwards, when he learned that he had resided as tutor the foregoing summer with one of the oldest and poorest, and therefore proudest families in Caithness. But all the time he conversed with her father, his eyes were hovering about Mysie's loveliness. She was quite uninterested in the conversation, and sat gazing before her with look distraught, with wide eyes and scarce-moving eyelids, seeing something neither on sea or shore. It was all that Ericson could do to keep the thread of the talk, and Mr. Lindsay would now and then correct him in some egregious blunder. And now and then Mysie would start awake to ask Robert or Ericson to help himself to some-

thing, or to take another cup of tea; but before the sentence was well finished it would die away, and she would speak the last words of it mechanically, relapsing into her former dreamy condition. Had not Robert been with Ericson, he would have found it wearisome enough, notwithstanding Mysie's beauty; and except things took a turn, Ericson, as Robert with all his lack of experience was sympathetic enough to see, would hardly be satisfied with the pleasure of the evening. But when tea was over things did take a turn.

"Robert has brought his fiddle," said Ericson.

"I hope he will be kind enough to play something," said Mr. Lindsay.

"I'll do that," answered Robert with alacrity. "But ye maunna expect ower muckle, for I'm but a prentice-han'."

So saying he got out his violin. Mysie, as I have said, had been looking rather on the wrong side of listless; but before he had drawn the bow once across, attention woke in her eyes; and before he had finished playing, Ericson must have had as much of beauty, in the musical changes of her expression, as was at all good for him. But while the stream of sound was floating Mysie's soul upon its undulations, little did Mysie think of the sky of love, filled with the glittering angels of silent thoughts, that arched over and embraced her careless being. How much love is there in the earth that the loved care not for! Nay, the universe is one sea of infinite love, whose consort of harmonies so many souls living by its ministrations hear not: if a stray note should steal across the sense, they let it die away unheeded. And what wonder then if a girl like Mysie should not care to perceive the visioned atmosphere in which her ideal moved in the mind of such a man as Ericson?

Robert caught sight of her countenance occasionally, and played better than usual. His touch grew intense, and put on all its delicacy, till, in relation to each tone, it was like that of the spider, which, as Pope so admirably says,

Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.

And although Ericson watched only the shadows of sound upon Mysie's face, yet the music did take hold of him too; for when Robert ceased playing he began to sing a strange wild ballad of the northern sea—not one made by himself, for he was not of those men who delight in trotting out their own work.

The witch-lady walked along the strand,

Heard a roaring of the sea;

And over a rock saw a dead man's hand,

Good for a witch-ladye.

Light she stepped across the rocks,

Came where the dead man lay:

Now maiden fair, with your merry mocks,

Now I shall have my way.

On his finger gleamed a sapphire blue,

And that's my ring, she said;

And back I take my promise true,

For the old love is dead.

She took the dead hand in the live,

And at the ring she drew;

But the dead hand closed with its fingers five,

And they held the witch-ladye.

Cold, cold with death came up the tide,  
 In no manner of haste ;  
 Up to her knees and up to her side,  
 Up to her wicked waist.  
 And over the blue sea went the bride,  
 All in her own love's ship ;  
 And up and up came the blue tide  
 Over the witch's lip.  
 For the hand of the dead and the heart of the dead  
 Are strong hasps they to hold ;  
 And the new love went with the fair fair maid,  
 And left the witch with the old.\*

This song was sung to a tune strange as itself, which neither Mysie nor Robert had known before. It was the first song Robert ever heard Ericson sing. It took a great hold of Mysie. Her eyes had grown wider and wider as she listened.

"Did ye write that song yersel', Mr. Ericson?" asked Robert.

"No," answered Ericson. "An old shepherd up in our parts used to say it to me, sometimes, when I was a boy. I have not remembered it quite, and must have altered some of the words—perhaps lines."

"He didn't sing 't, then?"

"No; *he* didn't. But once I heard an old woman crooning it to a child in a solitary cottage on the shore of Stroma, near the Swalchie whirlpool, and that was the tune she sang it to, if singing it could be called."

"I don't quite understand it, Mr. Ericson," said Mysie. "What does it mean?"

"There was once a beautiful woman lived there-away," began Ericson. —But I have not room to give the story as he told it, embellishing it, no doubt, as with such a mere tale it was lawful enough to do, from his own imagination to make it the more acceptable to Mysie. The substance of it was that a young man fell in love with the lady, though he knew she was a witch. And she let him go on loving her till he cared for nothing but her. And then she began to kill him by laughing at him; for no witch can ever fall in love herself, however much she may like to be loved. And she laughed at him and mocked him till he was nearly dead. Then he drowned himself in a pool on the seashore. And the witch did not know that; but walking along the shore, looking for what things the sea might cast up that would be of service for her wicked arts, she saw his hand lying over the edge of the rocky basin in which his body lay. Now nothing is more useful to a witch than the hand of a man, especially if he has come by an untimely death; so she went to pick it up. When she found it fast to an arm she would have chopped it off, but when she saw who it was, for one reason or another best known to witches, she would draw off his ring first; for it was an enchanted ring which she had given him to help to the bewitchment of his own fatal love, and she wanted both it and the hand to enable her to draw to herself the lover of a young maiden whom she hated. But she had herself already bewitched the dead man; and so the dead hand closed its

\* This poem is an exception to the statement made in a preceding note.

fingers upon hers, and held her, and all her power was powerless against the dead; and the tide came rushing up like a hungry beast, and she was drowned, and nobody went near her to help her. And her body lies to this day with that of her lover at the bottom of the Swalchie whirlpool, and before a storm comes, strange moanings rise from the pool, as if the lover were praying for the witch lady's love, and she, having none to give, were praying him in her turn to let go her hand.

As Ericson told this story the room glimmered about Robert as if all its light came from Mysie's face, upon which the flickering firelight alone played. Mr. Lindsay sat a little back from the rest, with an amused expression: legends of such sort did not come within the scope of his antiquarian reach, though he was ready enough to believe whatever tempted his own taste, let it be as destitute of proof as the story of the dead hand. When Ericson had ended, Mysie gave a deep sigh, and looked full of thought, though I doubt whether anything definite enough to be called thought swung hither and thither in the rapid flow and ebb of her feeling. Mr. Lindsay followed with an old tale of the Sinclairs, of which he said Ericson's reminded him, though the only association they could possibly have had was that the foregoing was a Caithness story, and the Sinclairs are a Caithness family. Nor did the deliberate manner of the narrator make up for its lack of incident and interest. As soon as it was over, Mysie, who could not hide all her impatience, asked Robert to play again. He took up his violin, and with great expression gave the air of Ericson's ballad two or three times over, and then laid down the instrument. He saw indeed that it was too much for Mysie, affecting her more, thus presented after the story, than the singing of the ballad itself. Whereupon Ericson, whose spirits had risen greatly at finding that he could secure Mysie's attention, and himself produce the play of soul in feature which he so much delighted to watch in her, offered another story; and the distant rush of the sea, borne occasionally into the "grateful gloom" upon the cold sweep of a February wind, mingled with one tale after another, with which he entranced two at least of his audience, while the third listened scarcely interested, but mildly content so long as Mysie was pleased. But at length it was time to go home. Mysie gave each an equally warm good-night and thanks, Mr. Lindsay accompanied them to the door, and the students stepped out into the cold moonlight. Across the links the sound of the sea came louder.

As they went down the garden towards the stair, Ericson stopped. Robert thought he was looking back at the house, and in modesty went a few steps in advance. A moment or two after Ericson joined him, and Robert, looking in his face, saw that all the life had gone out of its regard, and that he was pale as death.

"What is the matter wi' ye, Mr. Ericson?" he asked in terror.

"Look there!" said Ericson, pointing, not to the house, but to the sky.

Robert looked up. A very thin fog just dimmed the blue. Close about the moon, and nowhere else, were a few white clouds. Upon these white clouds, right over the moon, and near as the eyebrow to an eye, was a strangely contorted portion of that opalescent halo of rainbow colours, which is so often to

be seen on such clouds in the immediate neighbourhood of the moon. How it came about I cannot tell, but this fragment of a halo was bent into the rude but unavoidable suggestion of an eyebrow; while, circling the moon itself, and close around its edge, was a pale storm-halo, about as broad as the diameter of the moon itself, which, now at the full, formed the white pupil to this pale iris and faint-hued eyebrow—the whole a perfect ghastly eye of death, looking out of the winter sky. The vision may never have been before, may never have been since, but this Ericson and Robert saw in the heavens on that night.

And that night, with all its occurrences, every tune that he played, every story that Ericson told, remained fixed in Robert's mind for ever.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE LAST OF THE COALS.

THE next Sunday, Robert went with Ericson to the episcopal chapel, and for the first time in his life heard the epic music of the organ. That was a new starting point in his life. The worshipping instrument flooded his soul with sound, and he stooped beneath it as a bather on the shore stoops beneath the broad wave rushing up the land. But I am compelled to hasten over this portion of his history, not from ignorance of its details, but that the laws of time and space make themselves felt here as everywhere. Sufficient to say that he made acquaintance with the organist, was admitted to the instrument on vacant evenings; touched, trembled, exulted; grew dissatisfied, fastidious, despairing; gathered, hope and tried again, and yet again; till at last, with constantly recurring fits of self-despising, he could not leave the grand creature alone. It became a rival even to his violin. And once, before the end of March, when the organist was ill, and no one else was to be had, he ventured to occupy his place both at morning and evening service. But my reader must take my word that all this came about by natural sequences, without anything of the improbable, or even of the abrupt, which so many are ready to mistake for it.

Dr. Anderson kept George Moray in bed for a few days, and then let him go about with his arm in a sling; but he did not let him take to his porter-work any more. He advised Robert to drop the nickname as much as possible; but the first time he called him Moray, Shargar threatened to cut his throat, and so between the two the name remained. Then Dr. Anderson had an interview with the master of the grammar-school; a class was assigned to Moray, and with a delight resting chiefly on his social approximation to Robert, which in one week elevated the whole character of his person and countenance and bearing, George Moray bent himself to the task of mental growth. And having good helpers at home he got on admirably. His late developed energy turned itself entirely into the new channel, and he did well. As there was no room to be had in Mrs. Fyvie's house, he continued for the rest of the session to sleep upon the rug, for he would not hear of going to another house.

I presume that by this time Dr. Anderson had made up his mind to leave his money to Robert, but thought it better to say nothing about it, and let



the boy mature his independence. He had him often to his house, in which visits Ericson frequently accompanied him; and as there was a good deal of similarity of original character in the doctor and Ericson, the latter soon felt his obligation to the former no longer a burden. Shargar likewise was, though more occasionally, one of the party; and he soon began, in his new circumstances, to develop the manners of a gentleman. I say *develop*, for Shargar, whatever had been the earlier consequences of his condition, had a deep humanity in him, as abundantly testified by his devotion to Robert, and humanity is the body of which true manners is the skin and ordinary manifestation. Many talks did the elderly man hold with his three young friends, and his experience of life taught Ericson and Robert much, especially what he told them about his Brahmin friend in India. Moray, on the other hand, was chiefly interested in his tales of adventure when on service in the Indian army, or engaged in the field sports universally followed in that region so prolific of what seems monstrous to the European eye. His gipsy blood and lawless childhood, spent mostly in wandering familiarity with houseless nature, rendered him more responsive to these influences than either of the others, and his kindled eye and pertinent remarks raised in the doctor's mind an early question whether a commission in India might not be the best start in life that could be given him.

Between Ericson and Robert, as the former recovered his health, communication from the deeper strata of human need became less frequent. Ericson had to work hard to recover something of his leeway; Robert had to work hard that prizes might witness for him to his grandmother and Miss St. John. To the latter especially, as I think I have said before, he was anxious to show well, wiping out the blot, as he considered it, of his all but failure in the matter of a bursary. For he looked up to her as to a goddess who just came near enough to the earth to be worshipped by him who dwelt upon it.

At length the end of the session arrived. Ericson passed his examinations with honour. Robert gained the first Greek and third Latin [prize. The evening of the last day came, and on the morrow the students would be mostly gone—some to their homes to comfort and idleness, others to hard labour in the fields; some to steady reading, perhaps to school again to prepare for the next session, and others to be tutors all the summer months, and return to the wintry city as to freedom and life. Shargar was to remain at the grammar-school.

That last evening Robert sat with Ericson in his room. It was a cold night—the night of the last day of March. A bitter wind blew about the house, and dropped spiky hailstones upon the skylight. The friends were to leave on the morrow, but to leave together; for they had already sent their boxes, one by the carrier to Rothieden, the other by smack to Wick, and had agreed to walk together as far as Robert's home, where he was in hopes of inducing his friend to remain for a few days if he found his grandmother agreeable. Shargar was asleep in the other room on the rug for the last time, and Robert had brought his coal-scuttle into Ericson's to combine their scanty remains of well-saved fuel in a common glow, over which they now sat.

"I wonder hoo my grandmother 'll receive me," said Robert. "I don't like the thought of leaving you at all, Mr. Ericson.—She'll say 'Noo, be douce,' the minute I hae shaken hands wi' her."

"Robert," answered Ericson solemnly, "if I had a grandmother to go home to, she might box my ears if she liked—I wouldn't care. Little you know what it is not to have a soul belonging to you on the face of the earth. It is so cold and so lonely!"

"But you have a cousin, haven't you?" suggested Robert.

Ericson laughed, but good-naturedly.

"Yes," he answered, "a little man with a very fishy smell, in a blue tail-coat with brass buttons, and a red and black striped nightcap on his head all day, whatever the weather."

"But," Robert ventured to hint, "he might go in a kilt and top-boots, like Satan in my grannie's copy o' the *Paradise Lost*, for onything I would care."

"Yes, but he's just like his looks. The first thing he'll do the next morning after I go *home*, will be to take me into his office, or shop, as he calls it, and get down his books, and show me how many barrels of herrings I owe him, with the price of each. To do him justice he only charges me wholesale."

"What 'll he do that for?"

"To urge on me the necessity of diligence, and the choice of a profession," answered Ericson, with a smile of mingled sadness and irresolution. "He will set forth what a loss the interest of the money is, even if I should pay the principal; and remind me that although he has stood my friend, his duty to his own family imposes limits. And the creature has at least a couple of thousand pounds in the county bank. I don't believe he would do anything but for the honour it will be to the family to have a professional man in it. And yet my father was the making of him."

"Tell me about your father. What was he?"

"A gentle-minded man, who thought much and said little. He farmed the property that had been his father's own, and is now leased by my fishy cousin afore mentioned."

"And your mother?"

"She died just after I was born, and my father never got over it."

"And you have no brothers or sisters?"

"No, not one. Thank God for your grandmother, and do all you can to please her."

A silence followed, during which Robert's heart swelled and heaved with devotion to Ericson. But notwithstanding his openness, there was a certain sad coldness about him that always restrained Robert from letting out all that was in his heart towards him. The silence became painful, and Robert broke it abruptly.

"What are you going to be, Mr Ericson?"

"I wish you could tell me, Robert. What would you have me to be? Come now."

Robert thought for a moment before he made any reply.

"Weel, ye canna be a minister, Mr. Ericson, cause ye dinna believe in God, ye ken," he said simply.

"Don't say that, Robert," returned Ericson in a tone of pain with which no displeasure was mingled. "But you are right. At best I only hope in God; I don't believe in him."

"I'm thinkin' there canna be muckle differ atween houp an faith," said Robert. "Mony a ane 'at says they believe in God, has unco little houp o' onything frae 's han', I'm thinkin'."

My reader may have observed a little change for the better in Robert's speech up to this point. Dr. Anderson had urged upon him the necessity of being able at least to speak English; and he had been trying to float down the stream of speech from the antique Saxon dialect which they used at Rothieden, towards the modern and more refined forms of English. But even when I knew him, he would on the least excitement, especially when the subject was religion or music, occasionally fall back into the broadest Scotch. It was as if his heart could not issue freely by any other gate than that of his grandmother tongue.

Having made the last remark, and fearful of having it contradicted—for he had an instinctive desire that it should lie undisturbed where he had cast it in the field of Ericson's mind, he hurried on to another question.

"But what for shouldna ye be a doctor?"

"Now you'll think me a fool, Robert, if I tell you why."

"Far be it frae me to daur think sic a word, Mr. Ericson!" said Robert devoutly.

"Well, I'll tell you, whether or not," returned Ericson. "I could, I believe, amputate a living limb with considerable coolness; but put a knife in a dead body I could not."

"I think I know what you mean. Then you must be a lawyer."

"A lawyer! O Lord!" said Ericson.

"Why not?" asked Robert, in some wonderment; for he could not imagine Ericson acting from mere popular prejudice or fancy.

"Just think of spending one's life in an atmosphere of squabbles! It's all very well when one gets to be a judge and dispense justice; but—well, it's not for me. I *could* not do the best for my clients. And a lawyer has nothing to do with the kingdom of heaven—only with his clients. He *must* be a party-man."

"Well, what *will* you be, Mr. Ericson?"

"To tell the truth, I would rather be a watchmaker than anything else I know. One might at last make one watch go right, I suppose, if one lived a life of ordinary decent length. But there's no chance of anybody taking an apprentice at my age, though I should learn all the faster for my years and experience. So I suppose I must be a tutor, knocked about from one house to another, patronized by ex-pupils, and smiled upon as harmless by mammas and sisters to the end of the chapter. And then something of a pauper's burial, I suppose. *Che sarà sarà.*"

Ericson was in one of his worst moods. Mysie Lindsay was at the bottom of it—despair about her—no hatred to his fellows. But when he

saw Robert looking unhappy at his unhappiness, he changed his tone, and would be, what he could not be, merry.

"What's the use of talking about it?" he said. "Get your fiddle, man, and play 'The Wind that shakes the Barley.'"

"No, Mr. Ericson," answered Robert, "I have no heart for the fiddle. I would rather hear one of your poems."

"Oh!—Poetry!" said Ericson, in a tone of contempt—yet not of hearty contempt.

"We're gaein' awa', Mr. Ericson; an' the Lord 'at we ken naething aboot alane kens whether we'll ever meet again i' this place."

"True enough, my boy," interrupted Ericson. "I have no need to trouble myself about a profession. I believe that is the real secret of it after all. I shall never want a profession or anything else."

"What do you mean, Mr. Ericson?" asked Robert, in half-defined terror.

"I mean, my boy, that I shall not live long. I know that—thank God!"

"How do you know it?"

"My father died at thirty, and my mother at six-and-twenty, both of the same disease. But that's not how I know it."

"How do you know it then?"

Ericson returned no answer. He only said—

"My death will be better than my life. One thing I don't like about it," he added lightly, or rather with an attempt to speak lightly, "is the sense of coming unconsciousness. I cannot bear to lose my consciousness even by going to sleep. It seems to me a terrible thing."

"Ay; I suppose that's ane o' the reasons 'at we canna be content without a God," responded Robert. "It's dreidfu' to think even o' fa'in' asleep without some ane greater an' nearer than the *me* watchin' ower't. But I'm jist sayin' ower again what I'm sure I hae read in ane o' your papers, Mr. Ericson. Jist lat me luik."

Venturing more than he had ever ventured before, Robert rose and went towards the cupboard where Ericson's papers lay. His friend did not check him. On the contrary, he took them from his hand, searched himself for the poem indicated, and read it, prefacing the reading only with the words, "I'm not in the way of doing this sort of thing, Robert." And Robert answered, "I know that;" and Ericson read.

#### SLEEP.

Oh, is it Death that comes]

To have a foretaste of the whole?

To-night the planets and the stars

Will glimmer through my window-bars,

But will not shine upon my soul.

For I shall lie as dead,

Though yet I am above the ground;

All passionless, with scarce a breath,

With hands of rest and eyes of death,

I shall be carried swiftly round.

Or if my life should break  
 The idle night with doubtful gleams,  
     Through mossy arches will I go,  
     Through arches ruinous and low,  
 And chase the true and false in dreams.

Why should I fall asleep?  
 When I am still upon my bed,  
     The moon will shine, the winds will rise,  
     And all around and through the skies  
 The light clouds travel o'er my head.

O, busy, busy things!  
 Ye mock me with your ceaseless life;  
     For all the hidden springs will flow,  
     And all the blades of grass will grow,  
 When I have neither peace nor strife.

And all the long night through,  
 The restless streams will hurry by;  
     And round the lands, with endless roar,  
     The white waves fall upon the shore,  
 And bit by bit devour the dry.

Even thus, but silently,  
 Eternity, thy tide shall flow—  
     And side by side with every star  
     Thy long-drawn swell shall bear me far,  
 An idle boat with none to row.

My senses fail with sleep;  
 My heart beats thick; the night is noon;  
     And faintly through its misty folds  
     I hear a drowsy clock that holds  
 Its converse with the waning moon.

Oh, solemn mystery!  
 That I should be so closely bound  
     With neither terror nor constraint,  
     Without a murmur of complaint,  
 And lose myself upon such ground!

"Rubbish!" said Ericson, as he threw down the sheets, disgusted with his own work, which so often disappoints the writer, especially if he is by any chance betrayed into reading it aloud.

"Dinna say that, Mr. Ericson," returned Robert. "Ye maunna say that. Ye hae nae richt to lauch at honest wark, whether it be yer ain or ony ither body's. That poem noo——"

"Don't call it a poem," interrupted Ericson. "It's not worthy of the name."

"I *will* ca' 't a poem," persisted Robert; "for it's a poem to me, whatever it may be to you. An' hoo I ken 'at it's a poem is jist this: it opens my een like music to something I never saw afore."

"What is that?" asked Ericson, not sorry, I dare say, to be persuaded that that there might after all be some merit in the productions painfully despised of himself.



"Jist this : it's only whan ye dinna want to fa' asleep 'at it luiks fearsome to ye. An' maybe the fear o' death comes i' the same way : we're feared at it 'cause we're no' a'thegither ready for 't; but whan the richt time comes it'll be as nat'ral as fa'in' asleep whan we're doonricht sleepy. Gin there be a God to ca' oor Father in heaven, I'm no thinkin' 'at to sae mony bonny tunes he wad pit a scraich for the endin' aff o' them. I'm thinkin', gin there be onything in 't ava—ye ken I'm no sayin' onything about that, for I dinna ken—we 'maun jist lippen till him to dee dacent an' bonny, an' nae sic strange awfu' fash aboot it as some fowk wad mak' a religion o' expeckin'."

Ericson looked at Robert with admiration mingled with something akin to merriment.

"One would think it was your grandfather holding forth and not you," Robert," he said. "How came you to think of such things at your age?"

"I'm thinkin'," answered Robert, "'at ye warn a muckle aulder nor mysel' whan ye took to sic things, Mr. Ericson. But deed, maybe my luckie-daddie pat them i' my heid, for I had a heap ado wi' his fiddle for a while—though she's deid noo."

Not understanding what he meant, Ericson began to question Robert, and out came the whole story of both violins. And so the two sat chatting till the last of their coals was burnt out, and then they went to bed, to be wakened in the morning by the watch-dog, Shargar, that they might set out early on their long walk.

But Robert was awake before Shargar. The all but soulless light of the dreary season awoke him, and he rose and looked out. Aurora, as aged now as her loved Tithonus, looked gray-haired and desolate over the edge of the tossing sea, with hardly enough of light in her dim eyes to show the broken crests of the waves that rushed shorewards before the wind of her rising. Such an east wind seemed the right breath to issue from such a pale mouth of hopeless revelation as that which opened to the eyes of the youth as he looked across the troubled sea to the far horizon from which as yet there came no aid. Even that darkened; a cloud of hail rushed against the window, and Robert retreated to his bed. But ere he had fallen asleep again, Ericson was by his bedside, calling him; and before he was dressed, Ericson appeared once more with his stick in his hand, ready to confront the hailstorms that rushed half-hourly over the land, and, without any desired goal, to fight yet once again the varying battle of life. They left Shargar still asleep, and descended the stairs, thinking to leave the house without disturbing any one. But happily Mrs. Fyvie was watching for them, and insisted on their taking the breakfast she had prepared; for they were setting out on a journey of nearly forty miles with nothing but half a loaf in their pockets: there was bread and cheese at the roadside inns. But they started in altogether better condition after their landlady's hospitality.

When Shargar awoke, he wept in desolation, then crept into Robert's bed, and fell fast asleep again.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A STRANGE NIGHT.

THE youths had not left the city a mile behind, when a thick snowstorm came on. It did not last long, however, and they fought their way through it into a glimpse of sunlight. To Robert, healthy, powerful, and except at rare times, hopeful, it added to the pleasure of the journey to contend with the storm, and there was a certain steely indifference about Ericson that carried him through. They trudged on steadily for three hours along a good turn-pike road, with great black masses of cloud sweeping across the sky, which now sent them glimmers of sunlight and now a sharp shower of hail. The country was very dreary at this season and in such weather—a succession of undulations rising everywhere into bleak moorland tracts and heathery hills, which in autumn would flush into glorious purple, but were now black and cheerless, as if no sunshine could ever warm them into summer aspect. Now and then the moorland would sweep down to the edge of the road, diversified with dark holes from which peats were dug, and an occasional quarry of gray granite. At one moment endless pools would be shining in the sunlight, and the next the hail would be dancing the maddest fantastic dance upon the hard road all about them. Then they pulled their caps over their brows, bent their heads, and struggled on. At length they reached their first stage, and after a meal of bread and cheese and a glass of whisky, started again on their journey. They did not talk much, for their force was spent on their progress.

After some consultation whether to keep the road or take a certain short cut across the moors, which would lead them into it again with a saving of several miles, the sun shining out with a little stronger promise than he had yet given, they resolved upon the latter. But in the middle of the moorland the wind and the hail came on with increased vehemence, and they were glad to tack as it were among the huge stones that lay about the way from one to another, taking a short breathing time under the lee of each; and so when at length they reached the road, they had lost as many miles in time and strength as they had saved in distance. They did not give in, however, but after another rest and a little more refreshment started once more.

But the afternoon was now darkening about them, and the fatigue of the day was telling so severely upon them, especially on Ericson, that when in the twilight they heard the blast of a horn behind them, and saw the two flaming eyes of a four-horse coach come fluctuating towards them, Robert insisted that they should get up and ride the rest of the way.

"But I can't afford it," said Ericson.

"But I can," said Robert.

"I don't doubt it, if you say so," returned Ericson. "But I owe you too much already."

"Gin ever we win hame—I mean to the heart o' hame—ye can pay me then."

"There will be no need then."

"Whaur's the need than to mak' sic a wark aboot a saxpence or twa

atween this and that? I thoct ye cared for naething that time or space or sense could grip or measure. Mr. Ericson, ye're no half sic a philosopher as ye wad set up for.—Hillo!"

Ericson laughed a weary laugh, and as the coach stopped in obedience to Robert's hail, he scrambled up behind without another word of objection.

The guard knew Robert, commiserated the condition of the travellers, would have put them inside, but that there was a lady there and their clothes were wet, got out a great horse-rug and wrapped Robert in it, put a spare coat of his own, about an inch thick, upon Ericson, drew out a flask, took a pull at it, and handed it to his two new passengers, then blew a vigorous blast on his long horn, for they were approaching a desolate shed where they had to change their weary horses for four fresh thorough-breds.

Away they went once more, careering through the gathering darkness. It was very delightful no more to have to urge one weary leg past the other, but be borne along towards food, fire, and bed. But their adventures were not so nearly over as they imagined. Once more the hail fell furiously—huge hailstones, each made of several, half-melted and welded together by passing through a warmer stratum, and then frozen again to solid lumps of ice. The coachman could scarcely hold his face to the shower, and the blows they received on their faces and legs nearly drove the thin-skinned high-spirited horses mad. At length they would face it no longer. At a turn in the road, where it crossed a brook by a bridge with a low stone parapet, the wind met them right in the face with redoubled vehemence; the leaders swerved from it, and were just rising to jump over the parapet when the coachman, whose hands were nearly insensible with cold, threw his leg over the reins, and pulled them up. One of the leaders reared, and as the coachman was forced to hold them fast, fell backwards on the pole; one of the wheelers began to kick vigorously, in a few moments more, in spite of the efforts of the guard at their heads, the pole was broken, and all was one struggling mass of bodies and legs. The few passengers—there were but two countrymen besides our students—got down; and Robert, fearing that yet worse might happen and remembering the lady, opened the door and helped her out. He was in too great haste to observe her.

"What is the matter?" asked the voice that was dearest to him in the world—the voice of Miss St. John.

Robert gave a cry of delight.

Wrapped as he was in the horse-cloth, Miss St. John did not recognize him.

"What is the matter?" she repeated.

"Ow, naething, mem—naething. Only I doobt we winna get ye hame the nicht."

"Is it you, Robert?" said Miss St. John, recognizing his voice.

"Ay, it's me, an' Mr. Ericson. We'll tak' care o' ye, mem."

"But surely we shall get home to night?"

Robert had heard the crack of the breaking pole.

"Deed, I doobt no."

"What are we to do then?"

"Come into the lythe (*shelter*) o' the bank here, oot o' the gait o' thae brutes o' horses, an' we'll see what can be dune."

Miss St. John trembled a little, and the storm hissed and smote all around them, so she took Robert's arm; and, followed by Ericson, they left the coach, with all the men busy about the struggling horses, and withdrew to a bank that overhung the road where it turned towards the bridge. As soon as the wind lost its hold of them, Robert, who had already made up his mind, said,

"Gin I min' the country richt, we canna be mony yairds frae the auld hoose o' Bogbonnie. We micht win throu the nicht there weel eneuch. I'll speir at the gaird, the minute they get the horses clear o' their harness. We war 'maist ower the brig, I heard the coachman say."

"I know quite well where the old house is," said Ericson. "I went into it the last time I walked this way, for I found one of the windows open in the basement."

"We'll get the len' o' ane o' the lanterns, an' gang til't direckly. It canna be mair nor the breedth o' a rig or twa frae the burn."

"I can take you there by the road," said Ericson.

"It will be very cold, though," said Miss St. John,—already shivering, partly from cold, partly from disquietude.

"There's timmer eneuch there to haud's warm for a twalmonth," said Robert, as he went back to the coach.

By this time they had got the horses almost free. Two of them stood steaming in the lamplight, with their sides going at twenty bellows' speed. But the guard would not let him have one of the lamps.

"What are we to do wi' thae deevils wantin' licht?" he said. "But I'll gie ye my ain lantren gin ye like."

He had to get inside before he could light it from one of the coach lamps. When Robert returned with it, he found Ericson and Miss St. John talking as quietly as if nothing had happened.

Ericson now led the way, and the others followed.

"Whaur are ye gaein', gentlemen?" asked the guard, as they passed the coach.

"To the auld hoose," answered Robert.

"Ye canna do better. I maun bide wi' the coch till the lave gang back to Drumheid wi' the horses, an' fess anither pole. Faith, it'll be weel into the mornin' or we win' oot o' this. Tak' care hoo ye gang. There's holes i' the auld hoose, I doobt."

"We'll tak' gude care, ye may be sure, Hector," said Robert, as they left the bridge.

The house to which Ericson was leading them was in the midst of a field. There was just light enough for them to see a huge mass standing in the dark, without a tree or shelter of any sort. When they reached it, all that Miss St. John could distinguish was a wide broken stair leading up to the door, with glimpses of a large, plain, ugly, square front. The stones of the stair sloped and hung in several directions; but it was plain to a glance that the place must be dilapidated through extraordinary neglect rather than by the usual wear of

time. In fact, it belonged only to the beginning of the preceding century, somewhere in Queen Anne's time. There was a heavy door to it, but fortunately for Miss St. John, who would not quite have relished getting in at the window Ericson had spoken of, it stood a little ajar, and the wind roared in the gap and echoed in the empty hall into which they now entered. Certainly Robert was right: there was wood enough to keep them warm; for that hall, and every room into which they went, from top to bottom of the huge house, was lined not with oak, but with pine, upon which no paint-brush had ever passed. Neither was there a spot to be seen upon the grain of the wood: it was clean as the day when the house was finished, save that it had grown a little browner. A close gallery, with window frames which had never been glazed, at one story's height, leading across from the one side of the first floor to the other, looked down into the great echoing hall; but this was unrecognisable in the poor light of the guard's lantern. All the rooms on every floor opened each into the other;—but why should I give such a minute description, making my reader expect a ghost story, or at least a nocturnal adventure? I only want him or her to feel something as our party felt when they entered this desolate building, which, though some hundred and twenty years old, bore not a single mark upon the smooth floors or spotless walls that an article of furniture had ever stood in it, or that human being had ever inhabited it. There was a strange and unusual horror about the place—a feeling quite different from that belonging to an ancient house, however haunted it might be. Miss St. John's feeling of *eeriness* rose to the height when, in wandering through the many rooms in search of one where the windows were less broken, she came upon a spot in the floor. It was only a hole worn down through floor after floor by the drip of the rains from the broken roof. But it looked like the disease of the desolate place, and she shuddered.

Here they must pass the night, with the wind roaring awfully through the echoing emptiness, and every now and then the hail clashing against what glass remained in the windows. But they found a room with the window well boarded up, for until lately some care had been taken of the place to keep it from the weather; and there Robert left the others, who presently heard the sounds of tearing and breaking below, as necessity justified him in the appropriation of some of the wood-work for their own behoof. He tore a panel or two from the walls, and returning with them lighted a fire on the empty hearth, where, from the look of the stone and mortar, certainly never fire had blazed before. The wood was dry as a bone, and burned up gloriously.

Then first, Robert bethought himself that they had nothing to eat. He himself was full of merriment, and cared nothing about eating; for had he not Miss St. John and Ericson there? but for them something must be provided. Without saying a word, he took his lantern and went back through the storm—for although the hail had ceased, the wind blew tremendously—to the coach. There it stood on the bridge like a stranded vessel, with its two lamps holding doubtful battle with the wind, now flaring out triumphantly, now almost yielding up the ghost. And inside, the guard was snoring in defiance of the pother o'er his head.



"Hector! Hector!" cried Robert.

"Ay, ay," answered Hector. "It's no time to wauken yet."

"Hae ye nae basket, Hector, wi' something to eat in 't—naething gaein' to Rothieden 'at a body nicht say *by yer leave* till?"

"Ow! it's you, is 't?" returned Hector, rousing himself. "Na. Deil ane. An' gin I had, I daurna gie ye 't."

"I wad mak free to steal 't, though, an' tak' my chance," said Robert. "But ye say ye hae nane?"

"Nane, I tell ye. Ye winna hunger afore the mornin', man."

"I'll stan' hunger as weel's you ony day, Hector. It's no for mysel'. There's Miss St. John."

"Hoots!" said Hector, peevishly, for he wanted to go to sleep again, "gang and mak luv till her. Nae lass 'ill think o' meat gin ye do that. That 'll haud her ohn hungert."

The words sounded like blasphemy in Robert's ear. He make love to Miss St. John! He turned from the coach-door in disgust. But there was no place he knew of where anything could be had, and he must return empty-handed.

The light of the fire shone through a round opening in the boards that closed the window. His lamp had gone out, but, guided by that, he found the road again, and felt his way up the stairs. When he entered the room he saw Mary St. John sitting on the floor, for there was nowhere else to sit, with the guard's coat under her. She had taken off her bonnet. Her back leaned against the side of the chimney, and her eyes were bent thoughtfully on the ground. In their shine Robert read instinctively that Ericson had said something that had set her thinking. He lay on the floor at some distance, supported on his elbow, and his eye had the flash in it that indicates one who has just ceased speaking. They had not found his absence awkward at least.

"I hae been efter something to eat," said Robert; "but I canna fa' in wi' onything. We maun jist tell stories or sing sangs, as fowk do in buiks, or else Miss St. John 'll think lang."

They did sing songs, and they did tell stories, with which I will not trouble my reader: one story I would tell if I had more room—that of the house in which they now sat—a house without a history save the story of its no history. And if Miss St. John listened to story and song without as much show of feeling as Mysie Lindsay would have manifested, it was not because she entered into them less deeply. It was because she *was* more, not felt less.

My reason for recording the adventure is chiefly that this was Mary St. John and Eric Ericson's first meeting. He had heard her play once before, listening at her window: that was all he knew of her; but now, by these strange circumstances, they were compelled to meet. And it would be no wonder if, full as his mind was of Mysie, Eric should yet have felt the charm of a noble, stately womanhood that could give support, instead of rousing the painful suggestion of helplessness. For there was that in the dignified simplicity of Miss St. John that made every good man remember his mother;

and a good man will think this grand praise, though a fast girl will take it as a doubtful compliment.

Seeing her begin to look weary, the young men spread a couch for her of all their wraps, as best they could, made up the fire, and telling her that she would find them in the hall if she wanted them, kindled another fire there, and sat down to wait for the morning. And there they held another long talk, till at last Robert fell asleep on the floor.

Ericson rose and walked about. One of his fits of impatient doubt longing for certainty had come upon him, and in the dying embers of the fire he strode up and down the desolate hall, with the storm raving around it. He believed that he was destined to an early death; that he would leave no one behind to mourn for him; that the girl whose fair face and lovely infantile womanhood had possessed his imagination would not give one sigh to his memory, but would wander on through the regions of fancy growing less and less worthy as the years went on; and for himself, when the death-struggle was over, he might awake in a godless void, where, having no creative power in himself, he would be tossed about, a conscious yet helpless atom, to eternity. It was not annihilation he feared, though he did shrink from even the unconsciousness of sleep; it was life without law, existence without the bounds of a holy necessity, thought without faith, being without God.

My reader may in his own experience have observed how strange things sometimes come in pairs or trios—that when a thing however unusual has happened once, it seems more likely to happen again.

Miss St. John could not sleep for all her fatigue. The house shook in the wind which howled more and more madly around it and through its long passages and empty rooms; and she thought she heard cries in the midst of its howling. In vain she reasoned with herself; she could not rest. At length she rose and opened the door of her room, she scarcely knew why, but with a vague notion of being nearer to the young men. There she saw a light beyond.

Her door opened upon the narrow passage, already mentioned as leading from one side of the first floor to the other at mid-height along the end of the hall. Now that there was a fire in the hall, it shone through the lattice-work that inclosed the passage on one side, and rendered its relation of a gallery to the hall discoverable. But Miss St. John did not know this till, approaching the light, she found herself looking down into the hall, which lay in a red dusk below her. Then she stood, riveted; for in the centre of the hall, with his hands clasped over his head like the solitary arch of a ruined Gothic aisle, stood Ericson.

His agony had grown within him—the agony of the silence that brooded immovable throughout the infinite, whose sea would ripple to no breath of the feeble tempest of his prayers. At length it broke from him in low but sharp sounds of words.

“O God,” he said, “if thou art, why dost thou not speak? If I am thy handiwork, dost thou forget what thou hast made?”

Then, after a pause, during which he did not move, he cried again,

"There can be no God, or he would hear."

"God has heard *me*!" said a full-toned voice of gentle tenderness somewhere in the air; and looking up, he saw the dim form of Mary St. John half way up the side of the lofty hall. The same moment she vanished—trembling at the sound of her own voice.

Thus to Ericson as to the boy Robert had she appeared as an angel.

And was she less of a divine messenger because she had a human body, and did not hover in the air? The storm of misery folded its wings in Eric's bosom, and, at the sound of her voice, there was a great calm; and if we inquire into the matter we shall not find, I think, that such an effect indicated anything unworthy in Ericson either as to the depth of his feelings or the strength of his judgment. It is not through the judgment that the troubled mind is set at rest. A revelation is needed; a something for the higher nature to recognise as of its own, and lay hold of by faithful hope. And what fitter messenger of such hope than the harmonious presence of a woman, whose form itself tells of highest law, and concord, and uplifting obedience; such a one whose beauty has left the region of the *pretty* ages behind, and walks the upper air of noble loveliness; whose voice, even in speech, is one of the "sphere-born harmonious sisters?" The very presence of such a being is a denial in the face to unbelief. Harmony, which is beauty and law, works faith as its own consequence, without the intervention of any reasoning. And this visible Peace said, with that voice of truth, "God has heard *me*!" What better testimony could an angel have brought him? Or why should an angel's testimony weigh more than that of such a woman? Every noble being in proportion to its nobility is an embodiment of truth, and as such works its own natural influence upon the spiritual region capable of perceiving the truth. An understanding like Ericson's would only have demanded of an angel proof that he was an angel, proof that angels knew better than he did in the matter in question, that they were not easy-going creatures that just took what they were told for granted. The best that a miracle can do is to give hope; in these things it can give no proof. One spiritual testimony is worth a thousand of them. For in these things every man must find his own proof in becoming such that he is in harmony with that which he seeks; and that which he needs to save him is hope. "We are saved by hope." Hence it is no wonder that before another half-hour was over Ericson was asleep by Robert's side.

They were aroused in the cold gray light of the morning by the voice of Hector calling them. Miss St. John was ready in a moment. They found the coach waiting for them at the end of the grass-grown road that led from the house. Hector put them all inside; and before they reached Rothieden the events of the night began to wear the doubtful aspect of a dream. Nor did Ericson—I need not say, or Miss St. John—allude to what had occurred between themselves. But all the journey Ericson felt towards Miss St. John a similar feeling to that which Wordsworth felt towards the leech-gatherer, who, he says, was like a man in a dream,

Or like a man from some far region sent,  
To give me strength, by apt admonishment.

And there was a certain light in Miss St. John's eyes which showed her almost in a new aspect to Robert; only he remembered having seen something like it when, having repented of her momentary hardness towards him, she was patching up his wounded head. The presence of Ericson brought the older friends into more friendly contact still, and Robert's devotion to his benefactress was stronger than ever.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## HOME AGAIN.

WHEN Robert opened the door of his grandmother's parlour, the old lady was at breakfast. The moment she saw him she rose with more nimbleness than he had ever seen in her, pushed back her chair, and met him in the middle of the room. She put her old arms round him, offered her smooth white cheek to him, and wept. Robert could not or did not help crying too, for the kindness of his grandmother was precious to his soul. But he wondered that she did not look the least older than when he left her; for the time he had been away seemed age-long to Robert, although it was in fact only eight months at most.

"Hoo are ye, laddie?" she said. "I'm richt glaid, for I hae been thinkin' lang to see ye. Sit ye doon. Betty! Betty! Here's Robert."

Betty rushed into the room, drying her hands on her apron. She had not heard him come in.

"Eh losh!" she cried, and put her wet apron to her eyes. "Sic a man as ye're grown, Robert! A puir body like me maunna be speykin' to ye noo."

As she said this she was shaking his hand vehemently.

"There's nae odds in me, Betty," said Robert.

"'Deed but there is. Ye're sax feet an' a hairy ower, I s' warran'."

"I said there was nae odds i' me, Betty," persisted Robert, laughing.

"I kenna what may be *in* ye," retorted Betty; "but there's an unco' odds *upo'* ye."

"Haud yer tongue, Betty," said her mistress. "Ye oucht to ken better nor to gang jawin' wi' young men. Fess mair o' the creamy cakes."

"Maybe Robert wad like a drappy o' parritch."

"Anything, Betty," said Robert. "I'm at deith's door wi' hunger."

"Rin, Betty, for the cakes. An' fess a loaf o' white breid; we canna bide for the parritch," said the grandmother. And while Robert ate ravenously, he told her the adventures of the night, and introduced the question whether he might not ask Ericson to stay a few days with him.

"Ony frien' o' yours, laddie," she replied. "Whaur is he noo?"

"He's up at Miss Naper's."

"Hoots! What for didna ye fess him in wi' ye?—Betty!"

"Na, na, grannie. The Napers are frien's o' his. Ye maunna interfere wi' them. I'll gang up ance I hae had my brakfast."

"Weel, weel, laddie. Eh! but I *am* blythe to see ye! An' hae ye gotten ony prizes?"

"Ay have I. I'm sorry they're nae baith o' them the first. But I hae the first o' ane an' the third o' the ither."

"I am sair pleased at that, Robert. Ye'll be a mán some dáy gin ye haud frae drink an' frae—an' frae leein'."

"I never tellt a lee in my life, grannie."

"Na. I dinna think 'at ever ye did. An' what's that crater Shargar aboot?"

"Ow, jist gaein' to be a croon o' glory to ye, grannie. He vrought like a horse till Dr. Anderson took him by the han', an' sent him to the schule, an' he's gaein' to mak' something o' 'im, or a' be dune. He's a fine crater, Shargar."

"He took a munelicht flittin' frae here," said the old lady, in a tone of offence. "He nicht hae said gude day to me, I think."

"Ye see he was feart at ye, grannie."

"Feart at me, laddie! Wha ever was feart at me? I never feart onybody in my life."

So little did the dear old lady know that she was a terror to her spiritual neighbourhood!—simply because, having been a law to herself, she would be a law to other people as well,—a conclusion that cannot be concluded. Some people would rejoice to strike terror, and only make themselves ridiculous; others, who would shrink from their own spectrum, are spoken of "with bated breath and whispering humbleness." And I suppose it is all right that it should be so.

Mrs. Falconer's manner towards her grandson did not alter. He had ceased to be a child; her maternal responsibility had in so far ceased; her conscience was relieved at being rid of it; and the courtesy of her great heart came out to greet the youth, her grandson. She received Ericson with perfect hospitality, made him at home as far as the stately respect she showed him would admit of that result, and confirmed in him the impression what her grandson had said of her had already made. They held many talks together; and such was the care and circumspection of Ericson that although he never said a word that he did not believe, he yet so said what he did believe, or so abstained from saying what he did not believe, that although his theology was far from satisfying the old lady, she yet asserted her firm belief that the root of the matter was in him.

It was with some grumbling that the kind hearts of the Napiers, especially that of Miss Letty, parted with him to Mrs. Falconer; but it was the easier that she was an old friend, and that he was Robert's friend. The hearts of all three of these worthy women had so taken to the youth, that every time he came back he found that instead of being forgotten he was admitted further into their penetralia. Miss Letty was the only one that spoke lightly of him—ventured even to make goodnatured game of him sometimes, and that was solely because she loved him more than either of the others—more, in fact, than she cared to show, for fear of exposing "an old woman's ridiculous fancy," as she called her predilection to herself. "A lang-leggit, prood, landless laird," she said sometimes, with a moist glimmer in her loving eye, "wi' the maist ridiculous feet for size 'at ye ever saw. There was hardly room for the five taes atween them."

When Robert went abroad in the streets of his native town, he was sur-



prised to find how friendly every one was. Even old William MacGregor shook him kindly by the hand, inquired after his health, told him not to study too hard, informed him that he had a copy of Barbour's Bruce that he would like to see, &c., &c. Upon reflection Robert discovered what it was that occasioned this kindness: though he had scarcely gained a bursary, he had gained prizes; and in a little place like Rothieden—long may there be such places!—everybody with any brains at all took a share in the victory and distinction of one of the common brood.

Ericson stayed only a few days. He went back to the twilight of the north, his fishy cousin, and his tutorship at Sir Olaf Petersen's. Robert accompanied him ten miles on his journey, and would have gone farther but that he was to accompany Miss St. John with his violin the next day for the first time.

When he told his grandmother what he was going to do, she made no objection. She only said,

"Weel, she's a fine lass, that Miss St. John; and gin ye tak' to ane anither ye canna do better."

But Robert's thoughts were so different from Mrs. Falconer's that he did not even suspect what she meant. He no more dreamed of marrying Miss St. John than of marrying his forbidden grandmother. Yet she was no less at this period the ruling influence of his life; and if it had not been for the benediction of her presence and power, this portion too of his history would have been torn by inward troubles. It is not good that a man should batter day and night at the gate of heaven. Sometimes he can do nothing else, and nothing else is worth doing; but the very noise of the siege will sometimes drown the still small voice that would guide to the open postern. There is a door wide to the jewelled wall not far from any one of us, even when we least can find it.

Robert found, however, notwithstanding the pedestal upon which Miss St. John stood in his worshipping regard, that his feelings towards her were losing something of their placid flow, and I doubt whether Miss St. John did not now and then see that in his face which made her tremble a little and doubt whether she stood on safe ground with a youth just waking from the half-slumber of childhood to the consciousness of the holy and wordless mystery of loveliness that surrounds—no, that *is* a woman; tremble a little I mean, not for herself but for him. And indeed her fear would have felt itself more than justified if she had seen how he kissed a glove he found on the table as he waited for her one day, and then replaced it with the air of one consciously guilty of a presumption. He had left her a boy, with a boy's privileges, and he came back a young man, doubtful of his right to what had grown so infinitely in value.

And Miss St. John may have confessed to herself that had she not had her history already, and being ten years his senior at least she might confess it without danger, she would have felt no little attraction in the noble bearing and handsome face of young Falconer. I say handsome face, not because the rest of his features had grown into complete harmony and relation with his premature and therefore whilom portentous nose, as by this time they had, nor because of his eyes, in which glowed and gleamed more of humanity

than I have ever seen in another face of man, but because its manly beauty bore self-evidence of its being a true face and no mask, a revelation of the being and not a mere inheritance from a fine breed of fathers and mothers. As it was, however, she could admire and love him without falling in love with him, while she could not, as I say, help some fear lest he should not be capable of taking the correlative position. But she saw no way of prevention at present without running the risk of doing him more hurt; and besides she shrank altogether from putting on a false appearance of indifference. Any pretence was almost impossible to Mary St. John. She resolved, however, that before long something should be done, even if she should return to England and leave any impression she might have made to wear out in her absence and silence. But things did not seem to render this necessary yet.

Meantime the violin of the dead shoemaker blended its wail with the rich harmonies of Mary St. John's piano, and the soul of Robert went forth upon the level of the sound and hovered about the beauty of his friend. Oftener than Miss St. John could approve of was she drawn by Robert's eagerness into these *consorts*; for she could hardly help herself—or at least she thought so.

But the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

While Robert was thus once more within the gates of Paradise, Ericson was teaching two stiff-necked youths in a dreary house in the midst of one of the moors of Caithness. One day he had a slight attack of blood-spitting, but he took no notice of it, welcoming it, indeed, as a sign from what heaven there might be beyond the grave.

He had not received the consolation of Miss St. John without, although unconsciously, leaving something in her mind in return. No human being was ever allowed to occupy the position of a pure benefactor. The highest is indebted to the lowest. From her talk with Ericson, and even more from the influence of his sad holy doubt, a fresh touch of the actinism of the solar truth fell upon the seeds of truth in her heart, and her life took a fresh start, began to bud forth in new questions that needed answers, and new prayers that sought them. But she never dreamed that Robert was capable of sympathy with such thoughts and feelings: he was but a boy. Nor in dealing with the things to which these belonged was Robert at all on the same level yet with Mary St. John; for whatever her opinions may have been, however poor Ericson and Robert might have considered the theories which she had adopted without question from the teaching of that portion of the church with which her childhood had been associated, she had at least led a life hitherto, had passed through sorrow, without bitterness, had done her duty without pride, had hoped without conceit of favour, had, as she believed, heard the voice of God saying, "This is the way." Hence she was not afraid when the mists of prejudice began to lift from around her path, and reveal a country very different from what she had fancied it, being, in truth, far more lovely and full of righteousness and peace. But this anticipates; only I shall have little occasion to speak of Miss St. John by the time she has come into this purer air of the uphill road.

Robert was happier than he ever could have expected to be in his grand-

mother's house. The old lady treated him like an honoured guest, let him do as he would, and go where he pleased. Betty kept the gale room in the best of order for him, and, pattern of housemaids, dusted his table without disturbing his papers. For Robert began to have papers, though he never published anything in his life. Nor were these papers occupied only with the mathematics to which he was now giving his chief attention, with the occasional help of Mr. Innes, in preparation for the second session.

He took fits of wandering, though; visited all the old places; spent a week or two, at different times, at Bodyfauld; rode Mr. Lammie's half-broken filly; took in all the glories of the summer once more; went out to tea occasionally, or supped with the schoolmaster; and, except going to church on the Sundays, which was a terrible weariness to every inch of flesh upon his bones, enjoyed everything.



### THREE TIMES IN A HOPE'S LIFE.

#### I.

DEEP in my heart there liveth  
A hope so bright and gay,  
I cannot tell how bright it is,  
Or what it seems to say.

I only know that when it sings  
I must that singing hear;  
I cannot bid my heart be still,  
Or shut my listening ear.

A glory is upon the earth  
Since first that voice I heard,  
The sun smiles to the opening buds,  
Joy trills in every bird.

My hope! my hope! I hold it fast  
Close in my heart's embrace,  
Strong, stronger grows its wondrous song,  
I see its soul-lit face.

#### II.

Dead! cold and dead, there let it lie,  
Its life is breathed away,  
The hope that was is now no more,  
Its corpse alone will stay.

For months I nursed it, for I thought,  
So full of life it seemed,  
E'en life itself had not more life  
Than from my hope outbeamed.

That wealth of life now only makes

Its death more dark appear ;

Cold in my shivering heart it lies,

As on a funeral bier.

If it had been like other hopes,

I might have thought 'twould go,

I might have wept its death, but not

As now the hot tears flow.

### III.

Last night I felt a stirring,

Within my heart it stirred,

Something had found a living there,

'Twould make its living heard.

Like whispers from the leaves, a voice

Rose on my startled ear,

My very soul was stilled to catch

That sound, so strangely dear.

It was—no voice e'er moved me so,

My hope is mine again,

Breathing in lovely life, more fair,

Like violets after rain.

So deep, so tender are its tones

In life 'twill stay, I know ;

Smiling, it whispers in my ear,

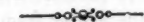
"I will not from thee go."

Hope ! dearly loved, thou camest back

As scents their flowers forerun,

As comes the morning star, before

The rising of the sun.



## WEATHER.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

NOT physical *mauvais temps*, that may be borne ; if it is too bad to be out in, one can stay indoors, and there is an end of it. Not so with moral weather, the climate that people carry about with them and insist on wrapping their friends in whether they will or not. I am aware that this is not an original subject ; but if nobody died of any but original disorders the over-population of the world would surely crowd itself off into space. It is the very commonness of the thing that constitutes the grievance.

To speak scientifically, *i.e.* Polytechnically, this atmosphere, like that of our earth, resolves itself into three elements and one over : the oxygen, or equable weather ; the nitrogenous, or solemn weather ; the hydro (how do they make that adjective ?), or spattering weather ; and the electric, or sunny weather.

Miss Lucy Keen belongs to the first. The cheerfulness of that young person will certainly make an end of me some day. She believes it to be meritorious too: says, with a grin like a bland Death's head, "I never suffer from low spirits;" and I don't suppose she ever does,—she distributes them so largely that she would naturally have none left for herself.

I spoilt my own dinner the other day by viciously relating a horrible accident that had befallen a friend on the Wengern Alps.

"How shocking! Did anything else happen to him?" said Miss Lucy, taking her asparagus with unabated relish.

"Did you hear the thunder last night?" I answered, with the inconsequence of one who is afraid he shall hit somebody.

"Oh, no, I was asleep."

It really does require a certain amount of magnanimity to confess that one has slept through a thunderstorm. I suppose I looked more benevolent, for Miss Lucy continued—

"Mamma says I always sleep like a baby."

This was a branch of the subject which a man not a brother could scarcely be expected to pursue. I inquired if she had seen her friends the Porsons lately.

"Haven't you heard? they lost all they had in that bank failure."

"That must be very sad for you."

"For me?" Miss Lucy's blue eyes opened in amazement. "I never see anything of them; they are gone down altogether."

"Where to?"

"Oh, to Lambeth, or New Zealand, or somewhere. They have absolutely nothing, not even a boy to open the door. Mamma says one must draw the line somewhere, and she draws it at people who open their own doors."

"But I thought you and Miss Porson were such friends?"

"Only acquaintances," replied Miss Lucy, decisively, dissecting an orange with surgical coolness.

Now I certainly knew from unpleasant experience that these two young people had been so fond of one another that they could not refrain from kissing in public, which would seem to indicate a rather familiar acquaintance; but of course I could only judge the matter from a masculine point of view.

"Mamma says nothing injures a girl's prospects so much as a crowd of undesirable connections."

I had had enough of Miss Lucy. Frankness is all very well in its way, like low dresses, but it should be a wholesome body that is revealed. Still one cannot rush off with a war-whoop every time one is disgusted with one's dinner companion. I could only feel grateful when her little lame brother, Charley, sidled up, saying, "Lucy."

"Well?" she answered, of course in a hard whisper. If women could but know how we feel their voices while we only look at their faces!

Charley replied, "What do you think nurse did to baby this morning?"

"How should I know?" said his sister, impatiently.

"He was naughty, and she took his fingers and doubled them into his hand, and squeezed hers over it like she does when she cracks a walnut, and I heard them go—just so. He went white and blue, and he did look at her so."

I felt an unmanageable desire to stride upstairs with a horse-whip, only it



is not a thing I generally carry about with me. To my utter dumbfounderment Miss Lucy dismissed the matter with—"I daresay nurse knows how to manage him."

I saw the little fellow gulp down a lump of disappointment, and look across at his mother; but a "not-to-be-bothered" expression sat plainly on her face. As though he were used to it, Charley limped over to his corner, and sat down with a plate of untasted fruit in his lap.

Of course I was not supposed to have heard; but there is a limit even to the law of not seeing. What do the Chinese call it? They made it an art, with a name, long ago, after their usual fashion of forestalling our inventions. My folly broke out in—

"I don't quite know what such a woman deserves; but I hope she will get it."

"What such?" inquired Miss Lucy, smiling so as to show just enough of her teeth. She has lost one.

"Any woman who does not go mad over an ill-used baby."

I half expected that she would call me out, or in some feminine way demand satisfaction; but she answered only "Ah?"—an "Ah" of such unfathomable placidity of dullness as fairly finished me—reduced me to an absurd ruffian that had misbehaved himself at table.

I have not quite decided whether to cut the Keens or to adopt Charley.

The nitrogenous, or solemn weather, is embodied for me in the person of John Thoms, "my father's friend," as he is fond of styling himself; a gentleman with meek black hair, an ostentatiously small tie, long black eyes, and a limp grey face. He has a resigned belief that the world is going to perdition, combined with the conviction that English institutions will outlast the Millennium. Thinks that things in general require improving at the rate of some forty thousand pounds a year; but that agitators are a device of the evil one. He has a profound sense of the arrogance of his superiors and the insolence of his inferiors, so that as, of course like most men, he has few exact equals, his social relations must be, to say the least, uncomfortable.

He reminds me rather of a turkey who on principle kept a red rag by him with which to exasperate himself. John Thoms's present red rag consists of teetotallers and trades' unionists. I am not sufficiently acquainted with either to know what connection there is between the two, nor yet to verify their special vices; but according to John Thoms they must have what my cutler calls "a large and varied assortment;" and so must most people.

We were sauntering along a dusty road the other day when a man, begging, met us. He certainly did not look, as he asserted, "starved;" but neither did he look as John Thoms said, "bloated." I should say that taking one day with another he generally had about half enough to eat. The coin he got from me would assuredly not buy him a dangerous amount of anything; but it was too much for Thoms, who at once took a tremendous header, far out of his depth and mine, into political economy, and came up gasping—

"Many a man would rather get a shilling by idleness than half-a-crown by hard work."

"Yes," I said, "I would." He looked so ridiculously discomfited that I

was obliged to explain. "It would be about equal, you know; you must allow the eighteenpence for the waste of tissues."

This revived him—served as a sort of argumentative Aunt Sally, which he pelted till we got home.

John Thoms has a wife who reverses him, and represents spattering weather. Taking parallel lines, their ideas of course never meet; and talking both together, as they have a habit of doing, they contrive between them to bother a man; as thus:

John, who speaks slowly from cavernous depths somewhere at the back of his head: "There are upwards of two million able-bodied paupers in England alone."

"Yes, the darlings! so interesting! I do love poor people so! One old soul we found rolling out her pie-crust with a bed-post," interposes Mrs. Thoms, the words, right or wrong, bitten off the edges of her front teeth.

"There is a spirit of mutiny pervading the whole earth; those who live long enough will find society shaken from its base," rumbles the male bird.

"Oh, John dear, as if there could be any base part in society! We are going to the Daltons' to-morrow, Mr. Foozy; the nicest people, with such a noble dog, and the loveliest baby—long black ears, you know; they call it Christopher Ferox, and I'm to be godmother, because it is so like me. The dearest clergyman, with such charming pink spots in his cheeks. They say he paints—not quite the thing, you know; but I daresay it's in the Rubric somewhere—ouf—ouf—oh dear, this cough of mine, how it stops me!"

As nothing else ever does, I don't know what Mrs. Thoms's friends would do without that cough; but I have noticed that they all take care to cultivate it with the last new lozenge.

John had subsided into a silent computation of the cemetery area required for London, but his wife began again—

"Isn't it shocking about the Emperor of Mexico? foolish man!"

"I don't see the folly," I said. "If he had been an ancient Greek or Briton he would have been the hero of the bards by now."

"Oh, but his wife, you know; don't you think a man's first duty is to his wife?"

"No, I don't."

"Ah, you are so droll."

It is one of the exasperations of society that whenever one is particularly ill-tempered somebody is sure to consider it droll. I meant to intimate that the madness of a high-spirited woman was scarcely a decent subject for chatter; but Mrs. Thoms was not to be quenched: she pattered on like a hen strolling up a church aisle, troubled by no sense of incongruity. Happily John came down upon us with—"Unless we can contrive to secure graves within the next two years, there will be no space for us at Highgate."

This was surely sufficient pretext for a flight. I fled.

I decline to paint the electric type, because my friend who stands for it has been in America, and is said to carry a bowie-knife.

I don't at all know what a bowie-knife is; but being American, it is sure to be something unpleasantly expeditious.

## TWO OLD FRENCH CITIES.

**I**F one desires to see an old town, it is worth while to walk round it hither and thither until one seizes the typical aspects; to make the round of the walls, if there be any yet standing; to ascend the belfry, if modern improvements have left it accessible; to take a quiet stroll over the adjacent meadows; to climb the neighbouring hills. Then one is sure to be rewarded by a sudden vision of beauty never to be forgotten—a picture complete in its unity, a portrait set in a fitting frame, an *expression* of the city henceforth indissolubly connected with its name in the imagination.



Cathedral of Meaux.

I have seen just such a picture of the cathedral city of Meaux, which may be painted by the brush of the travelling artist if he sits down upon an old stone just under the fence of M. Jacques Dumont's nursery garden, on the wooded hill due west of the town. M. Dumont's nursery is girdled by a lovely wood, which on the evening of the 24th of last May shone with a million raindrops in the yellow light of a setting sun. Whether to pursue the verdant paths, or whether to turn my back upon the sunset and sketch the town—this question, important when one is starting by a morning train, divided my mind. I decided for the latter, and sat down upon the stone. At my feet was a deep valley, along which ran a canal and a railroad. The canal was nearest and on the higher level. I had crossed it by an old-wooden

bridge, accessible only for men and beasts; and before me had ridden a good-wife on a donkey, bound to one of the upper farms. Beyond was the iron rail, just where the town ramparts must formerly have been. Across the railroad was the arch of the town gate, and from it the small city rose steeply, surmounted by its cathedral—Bossuet's cathedral, literally the object of my pilgrimage. All round the other three sides of the city lay flat green meadows, green with the luxuriance of May, and tall poplars shot up on either hand, their clustering spires vying with the towers of the church, breaking through the red lines of the roofs, and carrying out that suggestion of peaceful aspiration so eminently characteristic of the architecture of a cathedral town. These poplar-fringed meadows are watered by the winding Marne—a pretty sylvan river, which turns numerous water-mills, grinding corn and flour for the Paris market.

This mingled composition, wrought through ages by nature and art, might have challenged the pencil of De Wint. It is a subject which seems especially created for the walls of the old Water-colour Society. I am aware that this is putting the cart before the horse; but know not how better to realize Meaux to an untravelled reader, if such there be.

The rough pencil-sketch being jotted down, the tall front of the cathedral barely outlined, and poplar spires thrown in *ad libitum*, it was time to descend, for the yellow light was fading off the great western portal of St. Etienne, and soon the mist would surely be creeping over those flat meadows ere night fell.

The next morning, as we were bound to the church, the steep, narrow street was all alive with eager gossips standing on the door-steps. We asked what was the matter. Nothing more than a wedding. M. Jules the draper was marrying Mdlle. Hermence, daughter of the butcher who lived next door. And we saw the guests come dandily down the street, the happy bridegroom driven thundering onwards in a coach and pair; and presently the young bride and her parents sally from their door, each and all dressed in excellent taste, and the whole affair got up with such care and neatness and absence of vulgarity as impressed one very favourably as to the habits of the provincial middle class in France. We followed the party up to the church, the fine Gothic edifice of the twelfth and following centuries; and we witnessed the ceremony, followed by the *messe du mariage*. St. Etienne did not strike me as an especially beautiful cathedral; but then one is spoilt in the matter of French Gothic by the glories of Chartres and Rheims. But it looks large, and ancient, and quiet; it contains the grave and the pulpit of Bossuet, and the neighbouring Evêché is the selfsame house in which he lived. It is large and of many dates; the beautiful gardens extend to the rampart which still exists on the north. Some of the brickwork of the Evêché is of the time of Louis Onze, like that remaining fragment of Plessis les Tours; the stone vaults of the basement, once an open arcade, are much older. In the garden, away down a straight embowered walk, is the pavilion where Bossuet loved to write. It has been restored; but parts of the walls are ancient, and the crumbling woodwork has been refitted exactly as it used to be. Here, too, are the trim yews, forming a close alley, where he paced up and down.

The blooming flowers and the deep evergreens are just what they were two hundred years ago.

So little is known in England of that massive figure of Jacques Benign Bossuet, the Eagle of Meaux, as he was called in his lifetime! I have heard two more than competent English scholars speak of him, and one say to the other, with a shrug, "Oh, Bossuet was only an orator; a *great* orator certainly; but there was little else in him." But I could not help demurring to the verdict, thinking of the powerful square-headed man, younger contemporary of our own Cromwell, standing out in continental horizons as "a Father of the Church;" the man of whom Massillon said that he only needed to have been born in early ages to have been the illumination of councils, the soul of the assembled fathers, to have dictated canons, and presided at Nicea and Ephesus. Truly a splendid eulogium, and with due allowance made for the favourable prejudice of Massillon, hardly to be hazarded to keen and critical French ears had its subject been known only as a Demosthenes of the church.

Bossuet was born at Dijon, in 1627, and early destined to the priesthood. He was only fifteen when he first went to Paris, arriving on the very day when Cardinal Richelieu was borne through the streets in the immense litter or rather portable chamber in which he had traversed France (from Languedoc), borne by relays of eighteen guards. Sometimes the gates, sometimes the very walls of the different cities where he lodged had to be taken down to allow him room to pass. Three months afterwards Bossuet saw Richelieu lying dead upon his bed of state. Deeply impressed by these scenes, he frequently referred to them in after life. They formed an epoch whence he dated many things. He was ordained priest in 1652, and henceforth his name frequently appears as pronouncing public discourses; the one which chiefly concerns us is his funeral oration on an unhappy queen, Henrietta Maria, aunt of Louis XIV. It is worth while for an Englishman to read it, as showing the opinion of a very competent Frenchman on our civil troubles of the seventeenth century, when they were yet but recent. This was in 1669. Scarcely seven months had elapsed when Bossuet was again called upon to lament the fearfully sudden death of our Princess Henrietta, the youngest daughter of Charles, and sister to that fair image of death which our queen has erected in the church at Newport, near Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight. This poor Princess Henrietta, who had been in England visiting her brother, drank one afternoon a glass of chicory water, and was instantly struck with violent pain, to the utter confusion and dismay of the court physician, who could do nothing. Henrietta asked again and again for Bossuet, who hurried to St. Cloud. Three hours after midnight she died, preserving her intellect to the last, and accepting from him all the last consolations of her faith. It was when preaching on this sad event that he struck grief into the hearts of his audience by that short and terrible expression, "*Madame est morte!*" repeating it as though it were hardly to be credited in that brilliant court, and thence deducing his pious lessons. It would be worth while also to read this oration upon a daughter of England; she who was niece to the princess through whom our queen inherits.



Not much longer would I detain my reader upon the career of the great Bossuet. How he was named preceptor to the Dauphin, how he became Bishop of Condom, and resigned his bishopric because he could not reconcile the two duties, and how hard he worked to conduct the prince's education on the best plan, all this may be seen in the story of his life. Then we find him combating the king's successive passions for Mdlle. de la Vallière and Mdme. de Montespan; the latter in 1675. It was in May, 1681, that he was nominated to the bishopric of Meaux; he was fifty-five when he in the following year took possession of that house and garden still to be seen by the traveller. He lived there during the time of his troubles with Fénélon—Fénélon who is so exclusively the favourite of the English that they hardly recognize his great opponent. In the same pages are also to be found his opinions and his actions on the great Protestant controversy then distracting France, during which it will be seen that he did his best to influence the king to mildness, and never countenanced persecution. It was in August, 1703, that he fell dangerously ill at Versailles; it was at Paris, on the 12th of April, 1704, that he passed away to his rest, aged seventy-six years. His body lay awhile in the Church of Saint Roch, then it was removed to Meaux, where he was buried in great love and honour at the foot of the high altar, on the right hand or epistle side. His tomb was spared at the Revolution; and he still reposes under that Gothic roof, around which the tall poplars cluster so picturesquely as one sits upon the hillside to the west of the episcopal city of Meaux.

From Meaux we were bound to Rheims, the city of coronations; and we bowled through the Champagne country, and past the magnificent residence of "La Veuve Cliquot," under whose able feminine rule the vine business flourished so well (this lady, lately deceased, was reported to be the largest grower in France), until we came to the clean, quaint, old-fashioned town, on whose outskirts civilization has set a railway, a boulevard, and a public park, which contrast oddly with the massive Roman gate standing up forlorn beneath this northern sky.

Rheims, says the respectable voice of history (which voice is so exceedingly monotonous, unless you hear her discourse in the very localities), was already a large city when taken by Julius Cæsar. Bronze coins have been found of anti-Roman era; the most important bore the device of three heads, all turned to the left, and the inscription *REMO*. The conquerors built temples and palaces, triumphal arches, and a capitol. When the railway station was made in 1860, the workmen laid bare a magnificent mosaic floor. Then came the long middle-ages, Merovingians and Carolingians, a chronicle of fighting and baptizing; here and there a saint or two—Jovinus, the Christian Consul, who was absent when Attila appeared before Rheims; St. Niccixe, who was killed on the ramparts by that objectionable Hun (406), and St. Remy, who was archbishop in the time of Clovis, and assisted the Queen Clotilde in her successful 'endeavours' to induce the king to become a Christian. Later, church councils were held at Rheims, presided over by popes. And one archbishop was raised to the chair under the name of Sylvester II. This

was in 999. The instructed reader may further recall to his imagination the quarrels of the bourgeoisie with the clergy from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and the silencing of the same by the gradual pressure of royal power; the coronation of Charles VII. in the cathedral, under the auspices of Jeanne D'Arc; the struggles of the Ligue, when Rheims made great sacrifices for the Catholic side, and her defeat of the Spaniards under Louis XIV.

It is enough to mention these dates, just to show that the old city took her share in all the fortunes of France; and the modern traveller may be pardoned if he rolls into the railway station with only a general jumble of the facts in his head.

We put up in a roomy middle-class inn in the Rue Largé, built with arcades something like the Rows at Chester; a regular old French inn upstairs and downstairs; two courts, and my bedroom looking into one; with a full view of the kitchen, the man cook in a white cap, and two old women, whose existence seemed to be passed in shelling kidney beans. And there, having no dust of travel to shake off, we looked at a map; a nice little, neat map of the town, with the public buildings marked in deepest black, and asked ourselves what we had come to see. On my part, this was easily answered. I had come a long way to see all that remained, and which the imagination could reconstruct, of the mediæval city. Look at the towers, spires, and gable ends; the encircling walls, and little conical towers with their night-caps on. To the left you see the renowned cathedral, with the deep recesses of its triple portal, and to the right the pointed spires of the Abbey Church of St. Remy. This splendid old edifice, dating its foundation from the beginning of the fourth century, and exhibiting in its architecture the traces of each successive year, was, at the Revolution, turned into a stable and exercising ground for horses! The rich works of art were broken up, and the treasure sent to the mint. The tomb of St. Remy, with its twelve statues, was also knocked to pieces. All this has now been restored with long care and pains; the north tower rebuilt, as likewise the rose window, and the saint's tomb re-carved; such of the statues as were partially entire being again put up in their old places.

As for the rest of the town—all that mass of gable-ends, bristling with intermediate spires—there is not a square yard unbeautified to the imagination by some romantic or terrible event. The fortifications stood entire until 1722, when the first gate was demolished, and replaced by a simple palisade. Presently the authorities began to plant promenades outside the walls, and having taken down a second gate, they built a new one in its place, through which Louis XV., returning from Flanders, made his entry into the town. Two others were destroyed at the coronation of Louis XVI.; and so, one by one, just as happened at our own Canterbury, the traces of mediæval warfare disappeared: it is less than a hundred years now since the Kentish farmers, complaining that the loads piled on their carts were knocked off by reason of the lowness of the arch, prevailed on the town authorities at Canterbury to take down a magnificent old gate. For thirteen days did those "cruel men" pick and batter at the old masonry before they could abolish it.

As it is impossible in our limited space to touch upon half that Rheims contains of interest, we will take two periods of her history, both recent, and say a few words upon each; being, as they are, a curious contrast the one to the other. Firstly, then, the Revolution, which, as in so many of the provincial towns of France, brought its dismal tale of crime to swell the general calendar. Louis XVI., crowned here, as was each French monarch from age to age, touched the crown uneasily, as it was placed upon his broad sloping brow, and said, "*Elle me gêne*;" it was the opening word of the drama, which began here, as elsewhere, with amiable patriotism, loyal petitions to the throne, the foundation in 1791 of a "*caisse patriotique*," all whose notes enjoyed the best credit, and were scrupulously met. But the silver stream swelled to a roaring torrent, and in September, 1792, Rheims had its massacres, directed not, however, by a townsman, but by a Liegeois named Beaucourt, and some commissioners from Paris. The first victims belonged to the post-office; and, we may just observe, that a battalion of Federalists, partly composed of those same Marseillais who were called to Paris by Pétion, had come into Rheims from Soissons on the night of the 1st, in company with the emissaries of Danton, who ferociously desired to get up massacres in the provincial towns, coincident with those of Paris. The first person arrested was a postman, named Carton; he had been in bad odour with the people for a year and a half, because he had objected to the tearing down of the arms in one of the squares. He was now arrested under pretext of having neglected to leave certain newspapers at their address, and the same municipal officers who arrested him, also placed sentinels at the door of M. Guérin, director of the post-office, and at that of his neighbour, M. Canelle de Villarzy, accusing them of having abstracted letters and parcels. The news having circulated through the town, a great crowd assembled before M. Guérin's door by seven o'clock in the morning, and seeing, or fancying they saw, sparks issuing from one of the chimneys, took it into their heads that M. Guérin was destroying papers inimical to the public weal, and furiously demanded entrance. During that day the house was under charge of two members of the municipality, and an official inspection was made, the result being a declaration that nothing had been found. But at eleven o'clock at night, on an alarm of fresh sparks having been seen, another visitation was made; and if the report can be trusted (where so evident a desire for bloodshed existed), burnt papers were found in the kitchen chimney, some even in process of destruction. Guérin and his female servant were forthwith arrested and put in prison; as also M. de Villarzy. From this moment all was a wild scene of confusion. The great square and its adjacent streets were filled by a vile mob, among whom mingled Federal soldiers and volunteers. Hoots and cries, and reiterated demands for the blood of the prisoners, spread terror throughout the town. The National Guard took up arms, as did the troops lodged in Rheims; but these latter were more than inclined to fraternise with the multitude. One hour after noon a fourth arrest took place: that of a M. de Montrosier. His father-in-law, M. Andrieux, who was one of the municipal officers, tried to save him, and the councils wavered. But Beaucourt was not apt for mercy, and set off to seek Montrosier himself, who

followed "sur sa parole." But when they were about to mount the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, Beaucourt turned round sharply and said, "*Gueux, c'est en prison qu'il faut aller,*" and took Montrosier there himself. As he returned to the Hôtel de Ville, fresh cries of "*La tête de Guérin*" were heard. "*Mes amis,*" replied Beaucourt, "*vous voulez du sang, vous en aurez.*" In another moment a beam was being raised hard by the post-office, on which to hang the unhappy director. What need to particularize further? The authorities themselves favoured violence, and would not listen to the National Guard, when they desired to attack the mob. The prison was forced, for Guérin was dragged out and massacred before he reached the spot where the rope awaited him. A sapper cut off his head with a hatchet, and it was borne through the town on a pike, then taken to the cathedral, where the electors of the department were gathered to name *députés* to the National Convention. Other wretches fastened a cord to the garters of this first victim, and so dragged the headless body about the town; and finished by leaving it before the house of a relative. The poor postman, Carton, shared the fate of his master. His head was carried about fastened to the end of a broomstick, and a farce enacted of forcing beer into the poor stiffened lips. M. de Montrosier, taken from prison under promise that he should be brought before the municipality, was wounded on the back by a blow from a sabre. He fell, was killed, and his head was taken to his own house, and would have been presented to his wife, had not a servant fortunately barred the door in time. The priests were the next to suffer; two abbés from the environs were brought in and massacred on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. Two others were seized, successively wounded, and thrown on to a pile of burning wood, on which they died. The next day L'Abbé Paquot, the curé of the parish of St. Jean, a man of sixty, and dean of all the curés of the town, was the first victim. The assassins came to his home at nine in the morning, headed by one Chateau, a weaver, and took him to the Hôtel de Ville. They found him in his dressing-gown; but he got leave to change it for his *sontane*; and his arresters covered his white hair with the red cap of revolution. They tried to force him to take the famous constitutional oath; he refused; treated with personal violence, M. Paquot held firm. Some members of the municipality, who had come to make a vain endeavour to save him, read out to the murderers the law requiring the deportation of priests who refused the oath. They even begged him earnestly to take it; but the poor priest made answer, "*Je ne le puis. Si j'avais deux âmes, j'en donnerais une pour vous; mais n'en ayant qu'une, je la garde pour mon Dieu.*" Hardly had he finished these words, when the assassins pushed him out of the room, killed him, cut his head off, separated his limbs one from the other, and conducted themselves with indescribable and untranslatable ferocity.

The next victim was the Abbé Suny; he was more than eighty years of age. Women cried out, in vain, that he might be spared, as did many of the municipal officers. He was done to death by a band of rufians headed by Chateau the weaver.

In this time of terror, one man only showed effectual courage in saving the innocent. A certain Madame Gonel, imprisoned as "suspect," was threatened

with death by the assassins who rushed to her cell; they were repulsed by Monsieur Hédouin de Pons-Ludon, who was twice shot at by the brutal, drunken wretches; but succeeded in saving the lady.

Will it be credited that, on the night of the 4th-5th of September, the horrible fiends amused themselves by roasting the flesh of their victims? and—we need add no more! There is a certain satisfaction in winding up this portion of the story, by recounting that Chateau was sacrificed to the necessity of throwing the blame upon somebody. He was accused of having murdered the Abbé Suny, and brought before the civil authorities, who had remained passive during the previous horrors. Chateau naturally tried to defend himself by calling upon Beaucourt, the *Procureur de la Commune*, and threatening to tell all he knew in regard to the complicity of those in power. Beaucourt grew white with fear, and exclaimed, "*Voilà donc le sanctuaire des loix qui va encore être ensanglanté.*" But he recovered his equanimity when Chateau was dragged out of the hall and put to death upon the outside steps, to the cries of "*Vive la Nation.*" The body was taken to the corn-market and thrown into a burning pile; and his wife had a narrow escape of being converted into an involuntary Suttée. A detachment of the National Guard, aided by a company of Breton soldiers, were barely in time to save her from a vile mob, intermingled with Federalists and volunteers. One of them had got her by the neck, and was dragging her towards the fire. Capitaine Blin, fearful that in another moment he might be too late, ordered his men to fire upon the group of miscreants, and the miserable fellows straightway dropped the woman and took to their heels.

Nothing is more wonderful in all these stories of the Reign of Terror, both in Paris and the provinces, than the way in which the civil authorities appear to have yielded behind the scenes. Emissaries were doubtless sent from the metropolis to ferment the passions of the mob; but local elements fused only too readily with that which was foreign to the towns. Then, when a lingering sense of decency seemed to demand public notice of the atrocities, social vengeance fell upon some victim no worse than his judges, except that his right hand was perhaps the wettest. In 1795 others of the assassins were condemned to severe punishment or to the guillotine; but the Reign of Terror cannot be said to have ceased until 1796; for in March of that year the Representative Thunot condemned a nobleman and a priest to death, "*pour fait d'émigration.*"

We will pursue these terrible themes no longer, but turn to the chief monument of Rheims—the mighty cathedral which has stood through all the strange vicissitudes of French history, but whose great office, that of witnessing the coronation of the kings of France, seems now at an end for ever. I sat on a stone in the irregular square which spreads itself before the great West Front, and looked up at its thousand intricate carvings by the light of a May moon so brilliant that it might have been that of Italy. There was neither sound nor movement abroad, save the rare footstep of a late pedestrian, though the hour was only ten; and the sight was to me infinitely more touching than even that of Notre Dame de Paris. The procession of mighty men who had entered through the centre arch of that triple portal were but



the descendants of those crowned and anointed in earlier churches occupying the same site. Clovis was here sceptred; and here Louis le Debonnaire, Lothaire, Hugues Capet, and Saint Louis were made into kings. Saint Louis was the second monarch crowned in the present edifice, which was commenced about A.D. 1210, the preceding one having been destroyed by fire. His coronation took place on the 1st of December, 1226. Then comes the long romantic rôle—Charles VII., indebted for his crown to Jacques Cœur and the Maid of Orleans, who here carried the standard of France; Louis XI., of unblest memory; the amiable Louis XII.; the splendid François I., friend of Titian and contemporary of two other great kings of England and Germany; then the fair, frail Medicean youths. Henry IV. was not crowned here; Rheims was too Catholic a city for the Huguenot prince—the quarrels between them were long and many. But Henry's son, Louis XIII., was crowned and anointed at the ancient altar; and so was Louis le Grand, Louis le Bien-aimé, and the martyred "Capet," against whose name a brutal pen scored in the prison day-book, still to be seen in the Archives of Paris, the coarsely significant word "*raccourci*." Then came the bloody torrent of trouble which I described in a previous page; and here it would seem as if the story of Rheims cathedral would fitly end. How could this town, in which priests were dragged from their knees and murdered in the public place—in which victims scarcely dead were thrown into piles of burning wood—in which all law and order and sanctity had been, for many days of 1793, disregarded—over which an army of Russians marched in 1814, and were followed the next day by the troops of Napoleon, violent engagements taking place, and more than four hundred cannon balls being discharged against the fortifications, many of the balls and bombs pitching over into the streets, where mothers ran about distractingly, carrying their infants in their arms—how could this town, where Napoleon re-entered victorious, lodging three days in the Rue de Vesle, during which he worked incessantly, wrote to "Joseph" at Paris, scolded the Abbé Macquart for having persuaded his old friend, the Russian General Saint Priest, to spare the town (*Napoleon lui reprocha des relations avec les étrangers!*), and finally quitted, having named préfets to enforce his authority—how could Rheims ever again comport itself like a loyal, respectable town of the *moyen age*, and gather itself together to witness a royal coronation of a Capet? Yet so it did; and there is something almost ghostly in the idea—something sad and pathetically unreal.

It was at two o'clock of the afternoon, on Sunday the 29th of May, in the year 1825, that Charles X.—he who was Comte d'Artois in those days when the youthful group of grandchildren dwelt with Louis XV. at Versailles—came in his old age to be crowned the last king of France. Henceforth the land was to possess *un Roi des Français*, a President, an Emperor,—and who knows what to follow? But the Kings of France, that long picturesque line of men whose story is the most romantic in the world, had unwittingly their last crowned descendant in the old man with the high head and hooked nose, who entered Rheims that day with sound of music and booming of the great bell of the cathedral. Splendid were the preparations which had been made to greet him. In the Archiepiscopal Palace one sees the handsome

rooms—full of a certain magnificence, of the style of forty years ago—where he lodged for several days. The great church was lavishly adorned with all the treasures of religious art; and the vessels of gold plate used at high mass and in the consecration are yet shown to all comers. The king held a grand review of all the troops camped about the gates of the city; he visited the civil and religious establishments, and created a fresh batch of *Chevaliers du Saint Esprit*. By his side were the few members of the royal family who had escaped the awful storm of the Revolution. They are to be seen in the historical picture of the coronation, which is now in the Musée de Versailles. Madame d'Angoulême was there, the daughter of Marie Antoinette (she who, at the age of fifteen, learnt the bereavement of her hearth, by her waiting-maid bursting into sudden tears, and saying, "*Madame n'a pas de parents*"). The young Duc de Bordeaux was there; a child of tender years, the king's grandson, born after his father's assassination; and the child's mother, the Duchesse de Berri—she who had the spirit of a man to defend the royalty of France. And the family of Orleans were there, so soon to reign in Charles's place—so soon to find an equal fate in exile. And the peers of France were there—Montmorencies, and Rohans, and Noailles, accompanied by the graceful women of each noble house, and all clad in the most gorgeous robes of state, and wreathed in smiles because the heavy days were passed, and their order was supreme once more. Then the head of the king was anointed with *la saint ampouille*, the holy oil which the legend declares to have been brought by a snow-white dove from heaven, and given to Saint Remy for the baptism of Clovis. And the singing of the chorister boys rose sweetly into the vaulted roof, as it had done in the days of Jeanne d'Arc, when she stood beside that high altar with the Oriflamme in her hand; and *Bourdon*, the great bell in the tower, rang far and wide over the horizon. And the king was crowned and anointed, the tenth of his name and the thirty-ninth of his race.

But when the fêtes were over, and the last of the glittering company had filed away through the gates of Rheims, its wonted calm fell upon the ancient town. The pageant had vanished as a dream, and its results were wellnigh as fleeting. The inauguration of a new era was at hand; the railway and the factory came and established themselves on the outskirts, full of bustle and mirth; and the streets in the centre became grass-grown and picturesque. No royal processions enliven their handsome outlines; and the burning sunshine alternates with the bright moonlight of May, bringing out the marvellous portal of the cathedral into magic relief; but the traveller hears few footfalls at noon or nightfall, when

The large sun slowly moving down

Flushes the chimneys of that town;

It is past the ringing hour,

There is silence in the tower;

Save that on a pinnacle

A robin sits and sings full well.

Hush!—at length for prayer they toll:

God receive the parted soul!

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES.

## PLACARDS.

THE town crier, in his original shape, is no more. Like watchmen and hackney coaches, he has faded into the limbo of the dark ages. Printing and bill-posting have acted on him much as the police have upon our ancient guardians of the night, and Hansom's cabs on the primitive vehicles of our streets. He has been wheeled away with stage-coaches, eightpenny postage, five-act tragedies, buy-a-broom women, Jack-in-the-Green, the river pageant on Lord Mayor's Day, Wellington boots, trouser straps, stand-up collars, and clean-shaven chins. He is no more thought of as a means for advertising than muzzle-loaders for infantry, scissors and black paper for portraits, or bleeding and black draughts for a pain in the big toe. No, like all these venerable institutions, he is gone—gone from our gaze like a beautiful dream; and, in his place, what have we? Why, placards!—placards everywhere, placards announcing everything, placards of all sizes, shapes, and colours, from huge posters, with letters three feet long, down to mysterious advertisements in unintelligible cipher; from “the largest circulation in the world of the *Daily Telegraph*,” to illustrated catalogues of knives and forks. The placards on the hoardings in our city present a curious, and eke an interesting study, as they change and vary from day to day, like dissolving views or pantomime tricks.

The announcements there made to us are sometimes astounding, but not more so than the evidence thereby given of the marvellous amount of enterprise and competition which free trade in everything opens to all. It is a hackneyed phrase to say, now-a-days, that “one man is as good as another,” and a bad joke to add “perhaps better;” but if, by shouting or advertising our own praises, becoming in fact our own town-criers, we can prove ourselves superior to our neighbours, why the joke is not so bad, or so utterly without meaning after all. Not the least part, however, of the curious evidence of competition thus displayed is that portion of it which brings out the ingenuity and invention of the designers of the placards themselves. What an evident struggle there is continually going on to invent some new combination of forms, colours, or contrasts which shall catch the eye more readily than all the rest!

Now it is an actual portraiture, on a giant-like scale, of some individual who sings a song, or dances a dance, admirably executed, and, as we know, at great cost, put together on a hoarding block by block, piece by piece, and fitted with all the nicety that a paper-hanger would display in a lady's boudoir. Now it may be some equally graphic representation of a sensation scene in the last new drama or novel; or again perhaps a mere grotesque combination of words, with letters of divers colours and forms, announcing mysteriously, and to the uninitiated somewhat unintelligibly, the name of a forthcoming popular periodical. Artistic representations of garments standing alone, or displayed on the graceful proportions copied from the dummy ornamenting the portals of the outfitting establishment, the

Mart where you may buy cheap clothes,

And the wax boy stands with buttons all in rows!—

equally attract the gaze of the passer-by. Cheapness naturally advances itself as one of the leading recommendations in all advertisements, newspaper or otherwise; but our attention is now directed to placards, in the generic sense of the term: a noisy, self-asserting thing; a puff, a poster, a notice; an announcement, a crier's bell ringing continually; a something which arrests your progress, and from the encountering of which perpetually at last begins to interest you; a thing that you cannot escape from, that you meet at every turn, that bores your life out, but which, at the same time, fixes itself indelibly on your memory; so that if, in the event of your ever requiring the article recommended, your mind involuntarily reverts to the name and address of the manufacturer or vendor of it, whom you inevitably end by patronising.

Elaborate oil pictures of gentlemen having their hair cut, of cattle feeding in the fields, of farm-yards with pigs and poultry fattening on a particular food, curious agricultural engines, with portraits of farm-labourers, and sewing-machines with sempstresses tending them, decorate our dead walls, our omnibuses, and our railway carriages, and render the lining of our railway stations illustrated catalogues of the commodities commonly dealt in. Night itself only partially obscures these things, for an almost equal amount of ingenuity is displayed in lit-up placards in the shape of gas-letters, transparencies of all kinds, from the sensation scene in the domestic drama to the varieties of the illuminated lamp and clock-face. But the placard pure and simple, after all, is that which is to be found on our outside hoardings; weather-stained and mud-besplashed, they ever require renewing and varying, and these are the most efficient substitutes that can be devised for our old friend the town-crier. True, that in some very remote districts the actual crier may yet be used occasionally to announce the sale of some ricks of hay or litters of pigs. Here and there a sea-side watering-place is not above seeking his assistance when some fair creature has been unlucky enough to lose her bracelet or watch on the pier or esplanade. Again, like the watchman or hackney coach, he is to be found, just now and then, as it seems, chiefly to remind one of how utterly he has been superseded. An antediluvian "Charley" of a fabulous age and inconceivable decrepitude is, or has been, till within the last few years, visible on fine nights in certain old-fashioned neighbourhoods. Wearily wheezing out the hour, he totters along in a perfectly helpless condition, and rather as it would seem by the force of long habit than from any useful purpose he can serve, or any recompense that he can receive. In like manner a hackney coach, about once or twice a year, is seen lumbering from a railway-station, covered with boxes and filled with children. The old Brighton road again boasts of a well-horsed four-in-hand stage. It is still possible to pay eightpence for the postage of a letter, but it could almost travel round the world now for the money. A few people remain, perhaps, who have somewhere lately witnessed the performance of the tragedy of *Venice Preserved*, or the *Gamester*. Buy-a-broom women, I think, are utterly gone, as certainly as the Lord Mayor's Show on the river. Spurious Jacks-in-the-Green, in outlying suburban districts, now and then may delight the eyes of boys; but they get

terribly chaffed, if not pelted with mud and missiles. Anything like a respectful belief in them has undoubtedly long since come to an end. The Chain Pier at Brighton may yet retain its artist, who will cut your profile likeness on a piece of black paper, and for sixpence extra, tint with gold your waving locks and well-arched eyebrows; and the same skilful individual's double doubtless here and there may be found accompanying the travelling menagerie as of yore. I should think, however, that these must be the only two professors of the art extant.

Muzzle-loading rifles are, or shortly will be, found nowhere save in the ranks of our volunteers. The practice of blood-letting as a surgical operation can only now be resorted to by the surgeons attending on navvies, miners, or other uncivilised communities. Specimens of wellington boots, second-hand and refooted, probably might reward the search of the antiquary who would penetrate deep into the depths of Dudley-street, St. Giles. One of our most eminent comedians has been known within the last year to appear on the stage in the gaiter-cut, tightly strapped trousers; and I suppose here and there a city magnate of high respectability and great age may be discovered with a mutton-chop whisker and a stand-up collar swaddled round his throat with enormous folds of white linen, or held in its place by the unbending rigidity of a black satin stock. All these relics of the past, I say, may still linger on the threshold of the present, but the old dogs have nearly had their day, hustled aside by the advance of invention and the progress of civilisation. None of them appear likely, however, to be so ably represented and their separate places so well maintained as the town-crier. He, after all, will never die; for apart from the placards and advertisements which now do his work, and take the bread from his mouth, do we not all of us know some very good amateur town-criers? people who without payment or recompense of any kind will placard your affairs in such a way that not only those who run may read, but those who "sit at home at ease," and even those who are bedridden may hear all about you? people who will stand at the street corners ringing a bell and shouting in stentorian voices your last infamous and abominable, not to say criminal, deeds? people who are born town-criers, and can no more help being so than they can help the colour of their hair? people of an imaginative turn, who will not mind creating stories of wonderful adventures, in which you have figured as the chief actor? You! who are the most unoffending, moral, and easy-going of mortals—why, they will show how *you*, despite this character, which you are universally known to bear, treat your wife in a horribly tyrannical way; how you imprison, half-starve, thrash her, and spend her money on presents which you make in a disgracefully unblushing manner to La Signorina Fan Tutti of the Italian opera. They have it on undoubted authority, that being manager of the Hubble-bubble Bangalore Banking Company (Limited), your living in the sumptuous way you do is simply the result of a nefarious use you are making of the shareholders' capital. Or, because your ménage is moderate, you don't keep much company, and give nothing but beef and beer when a friend does dine with you, they will say that you are saving vast sums of money, not living nearly up to your income; that you are mean and



penurious—a miserly fellow forsooth, who ought in a word to be thoroughly ashamed of himself. There are no individuals so ready to become this kind of bill-sticker, and do your placarding, as those people who owe their acquaintance one with another to *you*, who, being introduced by you, hold you to be common property, to be dealt with accordingly. Partnerships of this sort offer wonderful facilities for town-crying. Notes can be compared, and it is notorious that two heads are better than one when invention is the faculty to be exercised. Bold, reckless bawlers these! “Stuffing the ears of men with false reports,” utterly fearless of the legal warning, “Stick no bills!”

Failing even the assistance of such good-natured friends, are there not many quite capable of acting as their own town-criers? or rather, incapable of acting as anything else?—men who will placard you their own difficulties, squabbles, domestic miseries, and all the troubles that flesh is heir to? who are “so loose of soul”

That in their sleep will mutter their affairs?—

men who will set up in the market-place their “fantoccini” theatre, play the drum and pandean-pipes to collect a crowd, and at the same time, with their own hands, even pull the strings and set the marionettes in motion. Marionettes, look you, that are skeletons—nothing but bones and death’s heads! the very rattle of which you can hear a mile off; and all selected from the cupboards, the very cupboards of their owners! Men fertile of resources in this respect, who, happening to be like the venerable Mother Hubbard, when she found her larder bare, will not scruple to take out the bones of your skeleton, or of anybody’s skeleton, articulate, dance, and parade them before the multitude. Men who, disappointed perhaps to find your skeleton a very little one—next to nothing indeed—will venture to fabricate one that shall be called yours, and dressed in your clothes, that shall be announced in your name, and ticketed with your card, address and all, unmistakably yours! Men who, disregarding all cautions given with respect to the locality of the laundry where dirty linen may be cleansed, never fail to let you look through them, nor will they hesitate to give you a lorgnette, by which you shall be able to see through all your friends! Verily, transparent placards of men!—not materially so, like Marley’s ghost, the back buttons of whose coat were visible from the front, or the unfortunate travellers at Mugby Junction refreshment-room, who have “the line surveyed through them,” but men who can disguise nothing about themselves, or anybody whose affairs they happen or do not happen to know. Wearing their hearts upon their sleeves for daws to peck at, they stand in a relative position to that placard so popular now at theatres or music halls, which, as we have said, at night forms a transparency, showing you the chief sensation of the entertainment going on within.

Another, but very different proclaimer of his own affairs, however, is conspicuous in all collections of placards. Not a transparent man this by any means; on the contrary, a very shrewd, wary, calculating crier; a man who believes thoroughly that there is nothing so successful as success; to whom the maxim that “to be poor, and seem so, is the devil all over,”

comes glibly enough ; a man who is always making his fortune, and telling you so—moreover, *showing* you so—giving grand entertainments to prove it, which could not be given, we know, unless it *was* true—the ringer of his own bell, the blower of his own trumpet, the shouter of his own praises. You must get up uncommonly early, and sit up uncommonly late, to gain a peep into the cupboard where he keeps *his* skeleton. You know he has one, of course, somewhere, but he will take good care that you don't see it. He does not want to look at yours—never troubles his head about it—and expects his bones to be treated with the same indifference. Capable of command, with a fine voice, and great intelligence, he is in a position to claim your attention ; and by the sound common sense he shouts, forces you, against your will perhaps, to listen, and listening, to believe—a fellow who takes the very breath out of your body, as it were, by the promptitude and energy he displays in all his transactions. Seldom or never making a mistake, he possesses that quick decision which in others would be hasty and rash, but which, coming from him, you have perfect reliance on. A great general, with the power of pointing out where advances should be made, and getting them made on the spur of the moment ; and above all, equally capable of beating a skilful retreat, hiding his mistakes, and even winning battles by them—whose defeats are victories compared with the successes of other men. Impossible for you, wanting what he deals in, to seek it from anybody else. His placards catch your eye, his name rings in your ears at every turn—shouted by himself very likely ; but could he employ any one who could shout louder or more effectually ? No ! forsooth ; and let me tell you, that if ever you want the services of a town-crier, you will be especially lucky if you can enlist the sympathies, or, what will do as well, make it worth the while of this “passed master” of his craft to give you his services.

Who, therefore, shall say that the crier is dead ? On the contrary, like the phoenix, he rises out of his own ashes with renewed strength tenfold. Advertise ! publish ! placard ! never heed the caution “Bill-stickers beware !” Up with your posters ; tell the world in the largest type what you are doing, or making, or selling ; and how much superior you are to your neighbours. Show up their shortcomings, and demonstrate the infamy of their proceedings. Spare no expense to invent a novelty in the shape of a placard. Get skilful artists to design you double life-sized portraits of yourself and family with which to illustrate the London boardings. Use up the colours of the rainbow—avail yourself of all the inventions which enable you to distort, and make conspicuous, by elongation or compression, every letter in our alphabet. Devise striking monograms, and ciphers impossible to make out ; decorate with every species of pictorial illustration ; create schemes for showing that the dearest articles may be bought for a song ; indeed, produce any manner or sort of placard which shall outdo in “loudness” those of all your neighbours. Do the utmost, in a word, of which your inventive genius is capable, but never say that the town-crier has ceased to exist.

On first thoughts, which are not always best, we imagined he had ; but no ! you, I, everybody, know him ; nay, under some circumstances, you I, everybody, may be he ! If we cannot get the placarding, that is

required done for us, why we must e'en do it ourselves! And who shall declare that stern necessity may not, in various ways, compel this? that we may not be obliged some day to resort to such placards as are formed out of carpets hung over balconies—transparent representations of what is going on within? How is it possible to say that we, weak, puny, mortals, may not be, so sorely tried sooner or later as to render it impossible for us to do other than shout our concerns to the crowd? We are healthy, strong, and determined of purpose, but what little accident may not render us the feeblest of the feeble? We step over rocks to day, and a pebble to-morrow may trip us up. Chains of metal wrought of hardest iron cannot hold us from our intentions; we start but to subdue; pursue our way, nor looking to the right nor left, swear we can resist all syren songs, all upturned looks. Now we can cut our way through every impediment, even at the cannon's mouth; but in a week's time the cobweb gossamer of a woman's eyelash may render us as helpless as an infant, and as incapable of command, as he who, after the battle of Actium, left his legions to shift for themselves, and sailed away in pursuit of the dark-browed Egyptian queen; vanquished by a single glance—the captor captive.

W. W. FENN.

---

### A BRUSH WITH THE PIRATES OF EL KATEEF.

IN the early part of the present century the Persian Gulf was a very hot-bed of piracy, and strange to say, the Indian Government of that date gave strict orders to the captains of the ships of war of the Indian navy not to interfere with the depredations of the pirates, unless they attempted to molest them or to attack English merchantmen.

In 1805 the then Imam of Muscat encountered these buccaneers in a naval engagement, and was himself killed. His nephew, the late sultan, always seconded the efforts of our government to put down this scourge. An unfortunate vessel called the 'Minerva,' trading between Bombay and Bushire, fell into their hands, after a most gallant and protracted resistance, which so exasperated them that they put the entire crew to a lingering death.

At length the Bombay Government was aroused from their lethargy, and in 1809 an expedition of a squadron of Indian navy ships, with some troops on board, was fitted out. The fleet sailed for Ras-el-khymah, or Cape Tent, their chief stronghold; the place was stormed, and fifty of their piratical craft burnt. The squadron then sailed for the island of Kishm, which was also reduced. All the tribes, from Muscat to El Kateef, who gained their livelihood chiefly by this system of piracy, were humbled, but it was only for a time. In 1819 another and larger expedition, under the command of General Sir K. Grant, sailed against Ras-el-khymah, which was again taken, after some desperate fighting, and with heavy loss on our side. But these fellows were, like the negroes of the present day, "irrepressible," and very

soon they swarmed again in the Persian Gulf, and narratives now and again appeared in the Bombay papers of atrocities committed by them on their captives which made the blood run cold in one's veins with horror.

There was rather a good story though of a sloop-of-war of eighteen guns, in which I subsequently served many years. The ruffians caught a Tartar in the old 'Elphinstone.' A large buglah had been fitted out by one of the most audacious of the tribes, called the Beni As, for the purposes of piracy; this buglah, it was reported, was to sweep the Persian Gulf not only of timid merchantmen, but it actually was given out that she would attack any man-of-war that she might fall "athwart-hawse" in her career of pillage and murder. Of course the Hon. Co.'s ship 'Elphinstone,' then on the Gulf station, was not backward in accepting the challenge. The captain, a glorious old seaman of the Benbow school, rubbed his horny hands with glee as he gave the order to the boatswain to pipe all hands "Up anchor."

The 'Elphinstone,' manned by as smart a crew as ever danced the deck of a cruiser, was not long in getting under weigh, and was soon bowling up the Gulf at the rate of eight knots an hour. On the third day they encountered the pirate. She was keeping the middle of the sea as bold as could be, and the crew were in a high state of elation, for they had on the previous day captured a merchantman, putting to death all hands, as was their custom. On the two vessels coming within gun-shot the action was commenced. The pirates quickly found out that their guns and gunnery were no match for the thirty-two pounders and the well practised smart firing of their antagonists, so they closed, intending to carry the sloop by boarding. The man-of-war's-men were nothing loth, and directly the two vessels struck and locked in deadly conflict a bloody but short struggle ensued. The gallant tars, cutlass in hand, stanchly met the swarms of black Mussulmans, as with the name of the "Prophet" in their mouths they streamed over the decks of the cruiser, climbing through the gun ports, creeping round the "chains," and vaulting over the bulwarks and "top-gallant forecastle" in dense masses. Sword in hand the captain headed his men, and the boarders were driven by sheer desperate fighting into the water alongside, where numbers of them were crushed and ground to pieces between the ships, as they lay yard-arm to yard-arm, or else were pushed headlong back whence they came, where they were in turn pursued and put to the sword like so many vermin.

The coast from Ras Musendom to the Bay of Bahrein, a distance of about three hundred and fifty miles, is so indented with small coves and creeks that it seems as if made by nature for a pirate haunt, and is called, in fact, the pirate coast. The most powerful tribe, whose capital is still at Ras-el-khymah, is called the Jawasimi; and between the intervals of the pearl fishing, which is carried on from the month of June to September, it was their practice in former times to use their boats, of which they have several hundred, for the less lawful but more congenial pursuit for which they have enjoyed so unenviable a notoriety. No doubt were the Persian Gulf squadron at any time taken away from its duty of watching over these unscrupulous Arabs, the whole pirate coast would again send out swarms of their buglahs to infest that inland sea.

Before commencing the narrative of our affair with the gentry of El Kateef, I will say a few words about the pearl divers of Bahrein, whom I have often watched off that island at work at their singular calling. The diver's ears are first stuffed with beeswax and his nostrils are closed by means of a piece of elastic horn which binds them together. He is then lowered into the water, standing on a heavy stone, which is secured to the end of a piece of rope, of which he takes hold. When he has been below water as long as nature will allow—which never exceeds two minutes, though the average is about fifty seconds—he shakes a small rope attached to the gunwale of the boat, and is pulled up. The oysters picked up from the bed of the sea he puts into a net which is secured round his waist. The bottom is covered with infinitely small shells of coral, and the depth is from five to fifteen fathoms.

The different tribes who fish on these pearl banks fight among themselves. By-the-by, it is a curious fact that all over the world fishermen seem to be quarrelsome, and not a few wars—as for instance, that of 1812 between ourselves and the United States—have originated from collisions among men of the same calling as St. Peter. However that may be, it is certain that during the fishing season one or two of the ships of the late Indian navy used always to be cruising about to prevent actual pitched battles among these truculent fishers. To elude the sea police the Arabs often agreed to land and fight it out on shore, where our guns could not reach the combatants.

The great danger to which the divers are subject arises from the saw-fish, a monster that grows to an immense size, and has a bony excrescence about six feet in length, and jagged like a saw. Wellsted, in his valuable *Travels in the Persian Gulf*, says that instances were known to him of divers being cut completely in two by these gigantic fishes. These poor fishermen, who from the nature of their occupation are short-lived, are badly paid, and the principal part of the profit goes into the pockets of a few wealthy merchants, who advance the funds for the boats and gear. So expert are these divers that they actually cleaned the copper of the 'Elphinstone' while lying in the roadstead off Bahrein.

On the mainland opposite and to the north-west of the island is the town of El Kateef. It contains, according to Colonel Chesney's account, about six thousand inhabitants: it is situated on low ground surrounded by gardens, and contains some good houses defended by a wall and a citadel. It was here that the affair with the pirates took place which forms the subject of this narrative.

While lying off Bushire, or Aboo Sheehar, as the Persians call it, with the other ships of the squadron, an announcement was made by the "syrag" of a small native trader that a number of armed boats had attacked a merchant vessel and carried her off to El Kateef, from whence they had sallied out on their lawless expedition. As soon as this news came to the ears of the Political Resident at Bushire, who was a naval officer and a man of great energy, he communicated with the commodore. The two sailors quickly arrived at the determination to punish signally this attempt to revive piracy in the Gulf. Forthwith the sloop-of-war, on board of which the commodore



flew his "broad pennant," and a brigantine, were ordered to be held in readiness to proceed to the opposite coast to ferret out these offenders. Water was taken on board that night, and at early daylight, the tanks being filled, the little squadron hove up their anchors and set sail for Bahrein. I was one of the officers on board the brigantine, and I recollect well how we youngsters congratulated each other on the prospect of a fight. Navy men, at the very name of a pirate feel as pugnacious as an Irishman in a fair when some one obliges him by treading on the tail of the frieze-coat he is dragging behind him, and the only anxiety from which we suffered was a dread lest the Arabs might after all yield up their prize without a struggle. As the event proved there was no ground for this fear, for the buccaneers were as full of fight as ourselves; and indeed it had been evident for some little time past that the plethora of bumptiousness from which these fellows were suffering would only yield to violent treatment, such, for instance, as "phlebotomy," a remedy which that eminent "Hakeem," Dr. Feringhee proposed, after a consultation, to adopt in the present instance.

We had a spanking breeze across the Gulf, and on the morning of the third day sighted the island of Bahrein. After this the wind fell somewhat and became baffling, yet we managed during the night to beat up sufficiently near the spot whither, according to the statement of the native we had taken on board at Bushire, the pirates had towed their prize. Soon after we cast anchor it fell a dead calm, and one of those lovely nights succeeded, to the beauty and peaceful stillness of which no words can do justice, and which seem to be peculiar to the desert solitudes of the East. The moon rose high and clear, shedding her pure light over the sea, and brought out in bold relief the white tower of El Kateef which gleamed in the far distance like a sheeted ghost. Why is it that moonlight always recalls to the distant wanderer gentle thoughts of home, and arouses religious sentiments in one's mind when on the solitary watch? Lord Byron even, scoffer as he was, acknowledges the tranquillizing influences of moonlight—

There is a dangerous stillness in that hour,  
A stillness which leaves room for the full soul  
To open all itself without the power  
Of calling wholly back its self-control;  
The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,  
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,  
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws  
A loving languor which is not repose.

With early morning the note of preparation, in the shape of shrill whistling from the pipes of the boatswain and his mates, sounded through the ship, turning all hands out, and "calling away" the boats' crews. We soon found that our arrival had been noted, for a boat had pushed off from the shore, and about six o'clock came alongside. To the question put with an injured-innocence air, by a chief who had come off in the boat, of what our wishes might be, the commodore briefly replied that he demanded the immediate surrender of the buglah which they had seized, and which was now moored some two hundred yards from the town of El Kateef. It was a very

large vessel for a native craft, about three hundred tons burden; and on looking through the telescope we could make out that she had many guns on board, which must have been placed in her since her capture, and also that she swarmed with men. The chief haughtily replied that his people would listen to no dictation, and could not give up the buglah; and moreover said "it was no business of ours." After this he took his departure, and we prepared our measures to try the question of "right *versus* might," in much the same summary manner as that adopted by "our friend the enemy."

The men snatched a hasty breakfast; and shortly after seven o'clock all the boats of the squadron were on their way to the scene of operations, fully manned and armed. The flotilla consisted of two cutters and the pinnace from the sloop-of-war, each of the two smaller boats carrying a six-pounder, while the pinnace mounted a twelve-pounder howitzer. The brigantine also sent her two cutters, mounting the same armament of six-pounders, and each manned with a complement of fifteen men and officers. On board the pinnace were seventeen men, with the second lieutenant of the sloop-of-war in charge. The captain of the brigantine took command of the "cutting out" expedition, and stationed himself in the commodore's gig, so as the better to direct operations. Well, all was now ready; the crews pushed off from the ship in high spirits, and, with a hearty cheer, gave way in the direction of the buglah. The commander issued directions that the men should pull leisurely, so that they might arrive fresh at the scene of action. After about forty-five minutes' rowing we reached within a cable's length of the large buglah, the object of our visit. We found she was moored "head and stern" to the shore, and that her decks were literally crammed with her swarthy defenders, who leaned over the bulwarks, their heads forming a long black fringe to the white chunam-washed sides of the craft. The beach was also lined with people of both sexes and all ages, who had come down to delight their eyes with the sight of the rout of the hated Feringhees, for of course their braves, the terror of the more peacefully-disposed inhabitants of the Persian littoral, would annihilate the small party of sailors who had the temerity thus to beard the lion of El Kateef in his den.

We pulled in line slowly up to the distance of about two hundred yards from the native vessel, and found our near approach greeted by the crowds assembled on the beach with defiant calls, and shouts of menace and derision.

The commander now ordered the boats to lie on their oars, while he directed the launch, which was in charge of the second lieutenant of the sloop, to fire a blank cartridge from her twelve pounder. No sooner had she done so than the fighting men on board the buglah filled the air with yells, at the same time striking their spears and swords against each other, and making altogether a terrific clamour, intended, doubtless, to strike terror into our hearts. We saw there was a commotion among the enemy; and presently a loud succession of reports, and a certain hurtling sound in the air over our heads, told us that the affair had commenced in earnest. They had opened upon us with seven guns, all of larger calibre than any we had.

The five boats carrying guns now formed into line, and we replied by a

brisk cannonade. The commander, also, from his gig in the rear, sent rockets over our heads into the midst of the masses of men on board the enemy's craft; and with great precision, as we afterwards discovered. Our fellows fought their guns with the greatest enthusiasm, but still with coolness; and after the first couple of rounds, nearly every shot from the guns plumped right through the top sides of the buglah's hull, committing great havoc among the Arabs as it ploughed right through the crowded decks, and passed out at the other side of the flimsily built craft. The launch now commenced firing shells, for which her gun, being a howitzer, was well suited. The cannonade was rapid on both sides, but there was great want of accuracy in the fire of the Arabs. It was quite evident they had not paid much attention to gunnery: our men, on the contrary, having been daily exercised in Bushire roads at practice at a cask moored a thousand yards distant from the ship, struck the part of the buglah at which they aimed every time, and did great execution among the armed mob.

We were not to have it all our own way however, for presently a round shot hit the sloop's second cutter, and sank her there and then, killing two men outright, and wounding three others with the splinters of the boat's timbers, though happily not very seriously. The remainder of the crew with the officers struck out towards their comrades. For a moment the gunners in the other boats ceased firing; but the commander desired them to continue the action, while he himself dashed in with his gig and picked up the survivors, whom he distributed among the four boats that had escaped injury, himself retaining the three wounded men, who were placed under the medical care of the apothecary of the brigantine, whom he had taken the precaution to bring with him.

At the sight of the success they had at length achieved, a shout of triumph was raised by the enemy, whose cries of defiance, by-the-by, had latterly given way to the silence of discouragement. Our brave fellows answered the yell by a British hurrah, and a more rapid renewal of their fire. The fact was, however, patent to us that the missiles from the enemy's guns—though we had silenced three out of their battery of seven—were aimed with greater precision. At this juncture the first cutter's six-pounder, which had previously carried away both the "breechings" with which it had been originally fitted, and also one of the spare ones supplied in case of accidents, was now totally disabled, for the third and only remaining breeching, together with the bolt to which the "shackle" was made fast, snapped like a rope-yarn. For these very sufficient reasons the commander resolved to make a dash at the buglah, and carry her by the time-honoured British method of boarding. All hands received this announcement with a stern delight. There could be little doubt our fire had done considerable execution among them; and from the fact of the enemy fighting without giving vent to the vocal uproar that had characterized the earlier part of the combat, we gathered they were somewhat disheartened at their want of success.

At the word of command, "Cease firing," the gunners, all begrimed as they were with powder and smoke, dropped down into their seats on the thwarts and seized their oars; the captains of the guns threw aside the

trigger lines, and we all felt a sort of relief, for the deafening roar of the cannon, and the crowding caused by fighting a gun in a boat already pretty full of men, would now be exchanged for the sterner ordeal before us.

The first act had been played out, and with success; the second commenced as the curtain of dense smoke lifted and was lost overhead in the blue distance. The question flashed across the minds of some of us (I know it did through mine, though without a doubt as to the answer) what would be the dénouement of this the final act of this tragic drama of blood and death? A few minutes more, and we the actors would know; but should we all know? The men settled down to their oars. "Give way, lads!" sang out the commanding officer, "give way, and the devil take the hindmost." The order was answered by a cheer, and away dashed the boats. In emulous haste they clove their way through the water, racing for the honour and glory of being the first to board the huge buglah with no less ardour and esprit than had inspired them when a few days before they raced in Bushire in friendly rivalry with the boats of the other ships of the squadron. The distance was not great; little more indeed than two hundred yards' interval between the starting post and the goal, and they were not long, I assure you, in getting over the ground. I was in the second cutter of the brigantine, of which boat I had charge. Owing to her length not being so great as that of the sloop's boats, we were some few feet astern of them in this novel regatta. The launch and cutter of the commodore's ship made for the stern while we boarded on the bow. I can hardly enter into details of this operation of boarding, for I can only remember the short flight across the intervening space, the shock as the boat, beautifully steered by the coxswain, ranged alongside the starboard bow of the enemy; I can recollect my calling out "Oars" as we neared her, and my practised eye told me that the boat had enough "way on her;" I can recall the sound of the clatter of the ashen oars as they were swung simultaneously into the boat, and then there was the fierce clutch at our cutlasses as every man, springing to his feet and seizing anything that came to hand, strove to be first on the enemy's deck. For my part, just giving the orders to board, I thought only of the task before me individually, *i.e.*, how most expeditiously to clamber up the bow. It was the work of a minute. In spite of the resistance offered by some swarthy fellows with faces of a generally demoniacal cast—in whom, however, the evil passions indicated by a more close scrutiny of their countenances were but ill maintained by their brawny arms—we managed to gain a footing on the deck of the pirate. Had these heathens but offered a tolerably stout resistance, they must have succeeded in repelling our attack and hurling us back discomfited whence we came; but the suddenness of our onslaught and the very audacity of a handful of men attempting to "cut out" a big craft mounting several cannon and literally crammed with the flower of their warriors; the audacity of the proceeding, I say, carried the day, as it often has done in naval warfare, *vide* the annals of the British navy from the days of Admiral Blake.

The only difficulty we experienced was in reaching the deck; but this done, the rest was all "plain sailing" where we had expected hard fighting.

With the truly English accompaniment of a loud hurrah, an accompaniment with which Jack never dispenses whenever hot work is in hand, we threw ourselves into the midst of the black-browed mob. Our shout was answered by a cheer from the after part of the ship, a response which at once told us that our shipmates had also gained a footing abaft.

To our utter astonishment, at this juncture, just when we expected the scrimmage to commence in real bloody earnest, all fighting in the way of an organized resistance ended. The natives panic-stricken turned and incontinently bolted. They had not far to flee, for enemies were in front of them, enemies in rear of them, so in their frantic desire to get away from the swords of the terrible Feringhees they precipitated themselves en masse, arms, accoutrements, and all, headlong into the water alongside. They had learned to swim from their earliest childhood, so in a few moments the whole amphibious crew, having betaken themselves to their native element, were making the best of their way ashore amid the shouts of laughter of all of us, now masters of the situation in so unexpected a manner. However there was plenty to be done, and we set to work to do it. The upper and lower decks were strewn with the forms of dead and dying Arabs, and the whole ship presented a sickening sight of blood and death. We cut the hawsers by which the buglah was moored, and laying out to seawards a "stream anchor" we had brought for the purpose, "warped" the prize off into deep water out of the range of the fire kept up at a safe distance from the shore by our faint-hearted foes, who had now resumed their portentous yelling. During these operations the heat was something terrific.

I believe it is a recognized fact that the Persian Gulf enjoys the distinction of being emphatically *the* hottest place on the face of this earth, Aden not excepted. The temperature of the Red Sea, as I can bear witness after cruising about its waters upwards of two years and a half, is fearful; but the heat in the Gulf on the pearl banks is simply intolerable. Up to about midday there is not a breath of air, and in spite of double awnings and the precaution of keeping all hands under cover, I have known men tumble down with sun-stroke as if felled by a blow from a pole-axe. All one can do is to loll about in a cane-bottomed "Chinese" chair, or lie on the deck with the perspiration streaming out at every pore, and feeling as if the mere effort of inhaling one's breath was as much as one could accomplish.

Well, to conclude my tale, the buglah was navigated to Bushire by a prize crew, and delivered over to her rightful owners, and we found on reckoning up the casualties incurred in this "Brush with the Pirates of El Kateef" that they were confined to those killed and wounded in the sinking of the cutter, with the exception of some bruises and contusions—so true is the old couplet which says

There's a sweet little cherub sits perched up aloft,  
To keep watch o'er the life of poor Jack.



## A PHOTOGRAPH FROM LIFE.

BY MRS. VIDAL

**G**REAT excitement was caused on a certain day, in the usually quiet household of Monsieur Borno, by a letter from the married daughter, Madame Artois, who resided in Rome, in which she informed her parents that a suitor for her sister Elise would soon appear at Villefleurs. And she further told them that this Monsieur A. de Villani, a young man of good birth and with a comfortable fortune, had been struck with a photograph in a shop window—so struck and charmed that he felt he must try every means to win the original for his wife! This photograph turned out to be one of her young sister that she had sent to be copied; and seeing that the young man was in earnest, she had promised to write and introduce him as an unexceptionable *parti*. Madame Artois wound up by reminding her father that Elise was no longer a girl, and that, in fact, it would be very foolish not to accept this bit of good fortune.

It was therefore agreed, in a family conclave, the fair Elise consenting, and with the due approval of the family friend, M. de Belandi, that the coming guest should be graciously received. M. de Belandi even insisted on having him in his own house, as he laughingly said, in order that he might the better judge if this M. A. de Villani was worthy of the prize he sought.

Among the numerous and various visitors to the beautiful southern city, Villefleurs, with its girdle of mountains and blue waves, few could help remarking, in the gay crowd on the promenade or in the public garkens, a girl, almost always accompanied by a favourite dog, whose elegant and quiet toilette, as well as her graceful walk and the piquant expression of her face, always made one wish to look again. It was an attractive face, rather than decidedly beautiful; generally wearing a thoughtful look, which, however, was often brightened by a smile which prettily curled her lips. There was a quiet elegance about her, altogether different from the fashionable ladies, English, French, German, or Russian, who rested on the chairs or paced up and down. Generally might be seen at her side Monsieur de Belandi, a man past youth, but with a vigorous, spare frame, whose keen dark eyes seemed to take note of everything, but were often turned on his fair companion with the tender familiar interest of a privileged friend. M. de Belandi was rich, and having no particular occupation, he made himself useful to his friends in general, but to those of the Maison Borno in particular. Thither he brought all the news of the place, to amuse M. Borno, who was too old and infirm to go out. He could tell of the last offence given to the old inhabitants of Villefleurs by the new French comers, or the latest reform in town regulations. He could say what was the prospect of the olive and grape crops, &c. He was always ready to escort Mademoiselle Elise to the theatre, or try a new song with her. He was a convenient partner at a ball, or a patient companion for a morning's shopping. Moreover, M. de Belandi's taste was a proverb. All this made his visits to the old Maison Pontneuf very welcome, and

with him seemed to come a little waft from the outer world to the very retired sombre street in which many of the old Villefleurs aristocracy resided, withdrawn from the newer part of the town to which visitors resorted. To look at it from the outside, one would not imagine the quaint and rich carvings which adorned the walls, or the broad marble steps and handsome suite of rooms belonged to this house.

In the simple and quiet manner common to the old inhabitants of the place, the principal amusement and luxury being to retire now and then to their maison de campagne, lived the Bornos with their youngest child, two other daughters having married satisfactorily. Nor were the old couple very eager for her to follow her sisters' example, in spite of the hints of their acquaintances, and M. de Belandi's serious warning, given every now and then, "that it really was high time to marry her." "Such an agreeable, amiable, gentle girl! it was a pity, and very astonishing. All her contemporaries were married, or about to be so; and Elise was nearly twenty-seven!" At this the old father would look troubled, and, shrugging his shoulders, ask what his friend would have. Could he do more? Had there not been two or three eligible proposals? but the girl had refused them all. Elise was dutiful, and the light of their old days; and it was surely not their duty to force her into matrimony, if she evidently preferred to remain as she was.

To this M. de Belandi said nothing, but looked relieved; for his visits to the Maison Pontneuf would have been very different without Elise. But on hearing the letter of Madame Artois, speaking so highly of the young man, and even appealing to himself to use his influence in favour of the match, he threw himself gallantly into the spirit of the adventure, and took care to be at the diligence office to receive and welcome M. A. de Villani, whose first visit to the Maison Pontneuf was paid in his company, his easy genial manners and real kindness helping to put every one at ease, and to draw out the somewhat nervous and agitated lover.

When it was over, they all agreed that not one word too much had been said in his praise. His manner was all that could be desired; his appearance pleasing; while it was evident that he was very much in love. On the other hand, M. A. de Villani poured out to his kind host his delight and satisfaction. There was no disappointment, Elise was better than her picture; and each time he saw her he found some new attraction. Truly she was one of those women who bear a close inspection, and whose beauty unfolds gradually; a woman who can brighten a home as well as a ball-room.

All the acquaintances and friends of the Bornos were eager and profuse in congratulations and inquiries. M. de Belandi told every one that it was a capital thing; that there was sure to be a gay wedding; and he joked Elise, and encouraged M. de Villani. Everybody observed what high spirits M. de Belandi was in; and yet for all this he caught himself sighing as he thought of Elise going away. But he was not a selfish man, and he felt that it was quite time for his little friend to marry.

After a time, however, M. de Belandi fancied that the young lover

## A PHOTOGRAPH FROM LIFE.

BY MRS. VIDAL

GREAT excitement was caused on a certain day, in the usually quiet household of Monsieur Borno, by a letter from the married daughter, Madame Artois, who resided in Rome, in which she informed her parents that a suitor for her sister Elise would soon appear at Villefleurs. And she further told them that this Monsieur A. de Villani, a young man of good birth and with a comfortable fortune, had been struck with a photograph in a shop window—so struck and charmed that he felt he must try every means to win the original for his wife! This photograph turned out to be one of her young sister that she had sent to be copied; and seeing that the young man was in earnest, she had promised to write and introduce him as an unexceptionable *parti*. Madame Artois wound up by reminding her father that Elise was no longer a girl, and that, in fact, it would be very foolish not to accept this bit of good fortune.

It was therefore agreed, in a family conclave, the fair Elise consenting, and with the due approval of the family friend, M. de Belandi, that the coming guest should be graciously received. M. de Belandi even insisted on having him in his own house, as he laughingly said, in order that he might the better judge if this M. A. de Villani was worthy of the prize he sought.

Among the numerous and various visitors to the beautiful southern city, Villefleurs, with its girdle of mountains and blue waves, few could help remarking, in the gay crowd on the promenade or in the public garkens, a girl, almost always accompanied by a favourite dog, whose elegant and quiet toilette, as well as her graceful walk and the piquant expression of her face, always made one wish to look again. It was an attractive face, rather than decidedly beautiful; generally wearing a thoughtful look, which, however, was often brightened by a smile which prettily curled her lips. There was a quiet elegance about her, altogether different from the fashionable ladies, English, French, German, or Russian, who rested on the chairs or paced up and down. Generally might be seen at her side Monsieur de Belandi, a man past youth, but with a vigorous, spare frame, whose keen dark eyes seemed to take note of everything, but were often turned on his fair companion with the tender familiar interest of a privileged friend. M. de Belandi was rich, and having no particular occupation, he made himself useful to his friends in general, but to those of the Maison Borno in particular. Thither he brought all the news of the place, to amuse M. Borno, who was too old and infirm to go out. He could tell of the last offence given to the old inhabitants of Villefleurs by the new French comers, or the latest reform in town regulations. He could say what was the prospect of the olive and grape crops, &c. He was always ready to escort Mademoiselle Elise to the theatre, or try a new song, with her. He was a convenient partner at a ball, or a patient companion for a morning's shopping. Moreover, M. de Belandi's taste was a proverb. All this made his visits to the old Maison Pontneuf very welcome, and

with him seemed to come a little waft from the outer world to the very retired sombre street in which many of the old Villefleurs aristocracy resided, withdrawn from the newer part of the town to which visitors resorted. To look at it from the outside, one would not imagine the quaint and rich carvings which adorned the walls, or the broad marble steps and handsome suite of rooms belonged to this house.

In the simple and quiet manner common to the old inhabitants of the place, the principal amusement and luxury being to retire now and then to their *maison de campagne*, lived the Bornos with their youngest child, two other daughters having married satisfactorily. Nor were the old couple very eager for her to follow her sisters' example, in spite of the hints of their acquaintances, and M. de Belandi's serious warning, given every now and then, "that it really was high time to marry her." "Such an agreeable, amiable, gentle girl! it was a pity, and very astonishing. All her contemporaries were married, or about to be so; and Elise was nearly twenty-seven!" At this the old father would look troubled, and, shrugging his shoulders, ask what his friend would have. Could he do more? Had there not been two or three eligible proposals? but the girl had refused them all. Elise was dutiful, and the light of their old days; and it was surely not their duty to force her into matrimony, if she evidently preferred to remain as she was.

To this M. de Belandi said nothing, but looked relieved; for his visits to the *Maison Pontneuf* would have been very different without Elise. But on hearing the letter of Madame Artois, speaking so highly of the young man, and even appealing to himself to use his influence in favour of the match, he threw himself gallantly into the spirit of the adventure, and took care to be at the diligence office to receive and welcome M. A. de Villani, whose first visit to the *Maison Pontneuf* was paid in his company, his easy genial manners and real kindness helping to put every one at ease, and to draw out the somewhat nervous and agitated lover.

When it was over, they all agreed that not one word too much had been said in his praise. His manner was all that could be desired; his appearance pleasing; while it was evident that he was very much in love. On the other hand, M. A. de Villani poured out to his kind host his delight and satisfaction. There was no disappointment, Elise was better than her picture; and each time he saw her he found some new attraction. Truly she was one of those women who bear a close inspection, and whose beauty unfolds gradually; a woman who can brighten a home as well as a ball-room.

All the acquaintances and friends of the Bornos were eager and profuse in congratulations and inquiries. M. de Belandi told every one that it was a capital thing; that there was sure to be a gay wedding; and he joked Elise, and encouraged M. de Villani. Everybody observed what high spirits M. de Belandi was in; and yet for all this he caught himself sighing as he thought of Elise going away. But he was not a selfish man, and he felt that it was quite time for his little friend to marry.

After a time, however, M. de Belandi fancied that the young lover

returned from his visits to Maison Pontneuf rather too quiet and silent in mood; though any allusion to the family only made him warmly declare that the more he saw of the lady the more he admired her.

"Then pray hurry on the marriage, my friend," returned M. de Belandi; "for it is very clear that courting does not suit you. You grow thinner and paler every day."

But M. A. de Villani only laughed.

It was quite a gay time at the old Maison Pontneuf, so many people came to hear "all about it;" and the father and mother were not at all disinclined to tell the romantic story over and over again, and receive the congratulations of their neighbours. But when any one ventured to speak to Elise herself, she drew up, and said "that congratulations were premature. It was true that the gentleman had done her the honour of asking her hand, but nothing was settled;" which speech caused a great deal of surprise and talk. And then, as time went on, and remarks were made on the evident gravity and the pale looks of the suitor, people began to speculate; and even a few bets were made as to what would be the ultimate end of it all. After the first greetings, this question was asked by every one—"Well, and what does Mademoiselle Elise say now?"—or, "Has Mademoiselle Elise said yes?" And M. de Belandi, who knew every one, grew excited and anxious, and warmly expressed his certainty that all would come right.

"You are right, and I am getting ill," remarked M. de Villani one day to his host and friend. "I cannot bear this any longer; and I have written home to say I shall return immediately."

"And when is the marriage to take place?"

"Never! No, I see plainly that she does not care for me—at least not as I care for her. I have struggled against this conviction, and thought I might win her at last. But she says neither yes nor no, and I feel sure she is partly led on by not liking to disappoint her friends—yourself first and foremost, for it is easy to see that you have a great influence over her. Even if she were to say 'yes' to-day, I don't think I should wish it. I feel I have not won her heart, and it has always been my dream and wish to marry for love,—love on both sides. So thanking you over and over again for your great kindness, I have decided to go and take my leave."

M. de Belandi was in his garden, smoking his cigar, when this conversation took place; and he continued to pace up and down between the orange trees in silence. Then suddenly turning to the other, he said,

"I shall go at once to the Maison Pontneuf, and you can follow me by-and-by."

M. de Villani shook his head, for he was convinced that his friend's well-meant interference would do no good, and he remained thinking it all over, trying to find the clue to Elise's feelings.

Meanwhile M. de Belandi arrived at the sombre old house, and rushing up the steps quicker than usual, he thought himself lucky in finding Elise and her dog in the drawing-room.

She was at once aware that there was something unusual in his face, and this brought a bright and becoming colour to her cheeks.



"How is this, Elise?" he said, trying to be angry. "I never suspected you of being a coquette."

And then he went on, in a somewhat excited manner, to upbraid her for keeping the poor young fellow in suspense so long.

"I don't think I have done that," she said in a low voice, and with down-cast eyes. "I always told him that—the truth, in fact. But he hoped I should change. And you see every one has taken it all for granted, and hurried things on so very much. And then papa and mamma seemed to wish for it so much, and—you—and—and——"

"Of course they did—of course we did, and do; and I'll tell you what, Elise, you are throwing away a chance you will never have again. There are not many young men like him, I can tell you. What can be your objection? Isn't he handsome, well-born, young, rich, agreeable, and very fond of you? The fact is, you are proud. Nothing will suit you less than a prince. But let me tell you, as an old privileged friend, that it is one thing to join a girl in her walks, and pay compliments, and take a chair by her in the gardens, and dance with her, and so on; but quite another thing to ask her in marriage. Ever since that Prince de —— has been introduced to you, I have observed a change. Don't be offended, *mon amie*, I speak for your good. It has made me sorry to see that poor young man so low and cast down; and after each visit he gets more and more so. Flesh and blood can't stand it, and I agree with him that it is best to end it at once. He says he shall return home, and is coming to say adieu. Now it rests with yourself, Elise, if he really goes or not. And—there he is. I know his step."

Giving her an extra friendly hand-pressure, to make up for his rough words, he left the place clear for a final explanation, and hurried off for a brisk walk. He felt the necessity for quick motion and fresh air, for he was agitated.

He could not help being keenly interested in this affair. He liked the young man much, and Elise was of course quite a pet of his own. Poor girl, her lips had quivered when he spoke so bluntly; but how pretty she was looking—such a graceful, winning style of beauty, lighting up the gloomy formal old room with her pretty gentle ways and womanly occupations! Yes, he should miss her terribly no doubt. Rome was a long way off, and he almost wished that *carte-de-visite* had never caught M. de Villani's eye. After all, why should not Elise remain as she is? Then he checked these thoughts, and began to wonder how it would be settled. He turned back, feeling anxious and nervous, and by this time the interview must be ended.

It was so, and M. de Belandi entered his own villa in time to see his guest just a few steps in advance, and from his attitude he read that all was over. The tale was told in a few words, and the next day M. de Villani set off on his journey home, trying his best to forget that *carte-de-visite*.

There followed much commotion among the friends of the Bornos; nor did it end there, for it became the general topic of conversation. M. de Belandi felt dull, having lost his guest, and then there was the reaction, and a flatness consequent on the unusual excitement. Besides

this Elise was never now seen in her old haunts, and when he went to the house she was not in the drawing-room. He feared she was annoyed with him and purposely avoided him whenever she could do so. When a meeting was inevitable there was a greater reserve, and an uncertain manner, so different from the old gentle pleasantness, that it made him unhappy.

"I don't know what ails her," complained the old father one day to M. de Belandi. "She pleased herself, or might have done so. But she is no longer the same girl. I was saying to her mother I wished you might call; for if any one can rouse her or find out what is the matter, it is yourself."

To please the poor old gentleman, M. de Belandi went at once to find Elise in a small boudoir where she sometimes sat. He had often been privileged to enter this room; and now, as his knock met with no notice, he pushed open the door without scruple.

Elise had been crying; but as she turned and saw him a blush covered her face, and she nervously tried to hide what looked like a photograph, which she had evidently been looking at.

"What, another photograph!" he exclaimed, trying to carry off the little awkwardness he felt by a joke. "Why, Elise, is it possible that there was a reason for your failing to see the charms of Villani? Have you too been caught by a *carte-de-visite*?"

To his surprise, instead of meeting his joke with a smile or a saucy retort, she bent her head, striving to hide her tears, and the hand which held the picture actually trembled.

"My dear Elise, what is it? Your father is quite unhappy about you. You are not an undecided person; but is it possible that you regret saying 'No?' A lady is allowed to change her mind."

Still her agitation seemed to increase, and she could not keep down her sobs. Presently she snatched her hand to her head, stammering some unconnected words about being not well. She forgot for the moment the photograph, which was by this movement exposed to view. M. de Belandi's astonishment was great indeed to see a by-no-means flattering full-length photograph of—himself!

He stood transfixed for a few moments, while a veil seemed to be suddenly raised from his mind, disclosing old things in a different shape, clear and defined—things which had hitherto been but dimly guessed at, and then suddenly hidden again; and while he was so gazing and so thinking she looked up and discovered what she had done.

By way of correcting the mistake she made another: catching up the photograph with a little exclamation of alarm, and then, with a sudden perception of what she had done, choking her sobs, she tried to explain "that she had been turning out her desk, and so—and so——"

But his eyes were now bent so earnestly on her face that she was in a manner compelled to meet his look.

"Elise, is it possible?" he whispered. Then presently he held out his arms. In a moment she was in them, clasped close, her tears falling softly. But a sudden change came over her face, and she struggled to release herself, saying,

"Leave me instantly! You have taken advantage of—— I like you as a friend, of course, but—— you misunderstand——"

"And I love you not as a friend, Elise. I have long done so. But I would not allow it to myself even. I was too old for you; you only thought of me, so I believed, as a grave relation and mentor. I know now what it all meant; my dread of losing you——"

"But you urged me on," she interrupted. "It was your words which nearly all but induced me to consent. You seemed to have set your heart on it."

"Not so. Let us sit down and quietly talk together a little," he said.

This they did, and he managed to convince her that if her heart had been given to him, it was not till she had full possession of his. But how could he, at his age, be so vain as to suppose that he had the shadow of a chance? He had tried to stifle every feeling bravely; too much so, indeed. But now, surely, she would not punish him for this?

The result of it all was, that to the utter surprise of M. Borno, his friend M. de Belandi made a formal proposal for the hand of his daughter Elise. The old gentleman had to seek for, and then put on, his spectacles before he could believe that he heard rightly, looking first at one and then at the other in a way to bring up blushes as well as smiles on the face of Elise. When he really took it in, consent was fully given, and after a little more talk between papa and mamma, they began to wonder how it was they had never thought of this before. So this was why Mademoiselle Elise had shown herself so difficult to please!

In course of time she confessed that she had only given up all hope when M. de Belandi had so urged her to accept Villani; and in the pain of that moment she had very nearly been driven, in a fit of pride and despair, to follow his advice.

There was a gay wedding; and when it was over, and the Maison Pontneuf was restored to its wonted quiet, old Madame Borno, sitting in her easy chair after the fatigue of the morning, exclaimed, "And it was all owing to a photograph, after all!"



## THE FOREST BRIDE.

From the Swedish of GEIJER.

**G**LOWING and glad leaps the sun from the wave ;

The huntsman in silence as deep as the grave

Leaves his slumbering wife ; his weapons he takes ;

His falcon he bears, and away he breaks,

With his gleesome, bounding dog, through the forest.

In the morning dew he bathes his hair ;

Stalwart he goes in the noontide glare.

The twilight comes on, and then the night ;

But still he hunts till he sees with affright

That far, far away from his home he wanders.

" O whither, O whither, thou comely one ? "

Thus sounds a voice ; — why that sweet voice shun ?

" Give me shelter ! " he cries ; on his mouth burns a kiss,

And before him, ere he can feel all his bliss,

In bright splendour stands a beautiful maiden.

He gazes on her, and she gazes on him ;

Welcome is rest to the weary limb.

The red lip with its ardent kiss of delight,

The blue eyes, and the bosom so snowy white,

Tempt the huntsman to clasp the maiden so lovely.

Night is dark, no one peeps through the forest walls ;

I know not, he knows not what then befalls ;

But when he awakes from his rapturous sleep,

He sees the thousand strange glories leap,

Of a palace deep veiled by the mighty mountains.

The diamonds look down like flashing eyes,

Like the countless stars of cloudless skies,

From the gorgeous roof built of dazzling ore ;

And the air breathes perfume evermore,

And every sense swims in speechless pleasure.

The gold-crowned bride in the gleam starts up,

And lifts to his lip the golden cup :

He tastes : flames play and crackle around ;

And the drops fall in showers of sparks to the ground,

Where, red as roses, they madly gambol.

" Ah ! truly I am in a realm of woe,"

He murmurs ; she shouts : — " I let thee not go."

Poor slave ! thou well thy doom mayest dread !

" Thou hast tasted my wine ; thou hast shared my bed ;

Thou art mine, thou art mine, thou art mine for ever ! "

The words stir his heart to rage and strife :  
He fights with the fiend for freedom and life.  
"Go, go," she exclaims; "it is Thursday eve;  
Ere midnight return; if you linger to grieve,  
And return not, my vengeance is rapid and deadly."

On his lonely way, panting in terror, he hastes;  
His dog is his guide on the trackless wastes;  
The huntsman cares not for storm or rain,  
If his loved, his well-known cot he can gain;  
He knocks:—"O, open the door quickly, dearest!"

In the cottage she sorrowful sits all alone,  
She opens: she knows his voice, pities his moan.

"How strange is thy glance, and how pale is thy face!"

"My vows I have broken,—O shame, O disgrace;  
Far more dread than remorse must be the avenger."

"May God thee pardon, thy wife can forgive;  
Many days bright and gladsome we still shall live;  
When thinking of thee I twined flower with flower,  
The sweet task lightened the weary hour;  
I said, 'He is faithful though flowers may wither!'

"O, I am not angry, why then look so wild?"

She fastens the flowers on his breast like a child;  
Too happy, she strokes his locks,—kisses his cheek;  
Now roar all ye thunders, ye tempests all shriek!  
The loved one's arm yields a calm, joyous, unbroken.

As melteth the mist in the sun's potent glare,  
So vanish his anguish, his terror, his care;  
As the zephyr caresses the dew from the rose,  
She kisses away each tear as it flows;  
He hopes and he hopes, the grim menace forgetting.

Hush! a footstep is heard on the cottage floor!

Or, is it the wind?—thrice the clock strikes four.

Something pierces the youth's breast like ice-cold steel,

And his days are ended, his woe and his weal:

And accursed be the demons true hearts that trouble.

At the dawn, the cot enter both women and men;

Saluted, the twain salute not again;

Their sleep it is soft, but their sleep it is long.

The priest and the clerk sing the funeral song:

The twain died together, and one grave devours them.

The young tell the tale, and then it is said

That the flowers on his breast with his heart's-blood were red;

But the old, when they tell it, warn maiden and youth,—

"If at home you are lovers, be lovers in truth:

Never seek other lovers away in the forest."

W. MACCALL.



## "A LITTLE OF WHAT YOU LIKE WILL DO YOU NO HARM."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

THIS was the frequent remark of a genial and worthy old grandmother. And the experience of her long life was not thrown away, when it left as a permanent idea this happy and sensible maxim.

In this vale of tears—a good many of us are apt to think it was only made for tears, and that any enjoyment in it is not only unreasonable but even a little sinful—we are born to sin, and educated to suffer. What is nice, comfortable, and delightful, we fancy, should not be indulged in by beings in a state of probationary trial. We ought to reject all pleasure, and cling to all that is disagreeable.

Now considering that we cannot look to the right or to the left, before or behind us, even within a yard of the spot on which we stand, without seeing something of the innumerable blessings with which God has bountifully gifted the earth, it is impossible for us not to enjoy them. Few are so callous as not to delight in the charms of nature—in the variety of beauty in the world, and the unrivalled loveliness and splendour of the heavens. But say the fearful, the timid, or the austere—"These we may enjoy, they are the works of God; we may go to any extent in admiring them. There is no fear of our enjoying them too much. But we should beware of sinful human nature, which ought to be curbed and checked; it is the smaller matters that concern ourselves which we ought to limit or extirpate." A too great fondness for each other, a love of fine things, a passion for music, a devotion to painting, a longing for all sorts of foolish and forbidden things—dress, amusement, eating, books; of all these things prudent and fearful people hesitate even to taste, lest they might taste too much. They think it best to tread the safe path of denial, rather than sip of the numerous and delicious pleasures so lavishly scattered over the world for our benefit.

But our old grandmother thought differently. "A little of what you like will do you no harm." And startling as this may appear to the over-scrupulous, it is really the truest and safest path to tread.

Let us take for instance a family of young people, brought up with the tenderest regard to their future welfare, with a trembling apprehension of the snares that lie in the way to prevent them attaining it. Is it not better to let them taste a little of that pleasure permitted to others without apparent damage, so that they may judge for themselves how far such pleasures add to their happiness? Sensible and affectionate natures can safely be trusted to take "a little of that which they like," without danger of satiating themselves to repletion. They know that such a course will at best lead to no pleasure at all, and may end in disgust. Their intention is only to enjoy to the limit of enjoyment, not to make a toil of that which was meant for pleasure. Surely this is better than denying youth any participation in all that youth loves, in fear lest he may love it too much.

Every heart has its longings, and not to have them gratified (provided they are not sinful) frequently does more mischief than the gratification itself. Too much importance is attached to things that are meant only for trifles in the world; and go where one will, those we guard with so much care see that others are permitted to do what they are denied, and are apparently all the better for it. This leads to deception perhaps, perhaps to disobedience, perhaps to a misgiving as to the judgment of those against whose fiat there is no present appeal. But there is a future when, unshackled and free, the long pent-up spirit has no other control than its own whims and longings. Bursting forth with wild joy, it has no experience to guide it, no taste of the "little" to enable it to know what it "likes;" but snatching at all and everything that comes in its way, may wind up at last a broken, shattered thing, shipwrecked on the shoals of folly.

There are people who think it best to be strict in the bringing up of those intrusted to their care, under the plea that at all events they are not to blame, they did their duty, no harm was learnt during their rule; whereas all the mischief was really done by them.

Boys restricted from guns, from hunting, and from mixing with girls, feel the baleful effects of the denial perhaps to the last day of their lives. What is learnt early is generally best learnt; and the knowledge of the mischief a gun may do without care, is more apt to be remembered by the proud boy who is early intrusted with one, than the hot-headed youth who is anxious to prove he can shoot before he knows how to load. His vanity will not suffer him to be taught, and his ambition despises caution. If he escapes shooting himself, or somebody else, he is lucky; but he only regrets once that he did not have "a little of what he likes" at an earlier period.

The same with riding. Education of the mind and intellect begins early, and so should education of the body; and the manly sports of the English gentleman cannot be begun too soon by the English boy.

And as regards the society of girls, they cannot have too much of that either. An anxious and timid father kept his three sons religiously apart from all female society save that of their mother and aunts, and he only permitted the maternal salute on parting and welcoming home again. His eldest son, at the age of nineteen, married clandestinely a pretty little milliner, who lavished her h's on every word in the English language but the right ones. The second did much worse; and the third has been long banished from his father's home, too depraved a character to be admitted into it. It may have been much the same either way; but one cannot help fancying if they had always been accustomed from boyhood to the "sweet silvery laughter" of girls, to their grace and gaiety, and to their gentle modest ways, they would not have fallen victims to the first pretty face they saw.

Girls kept too strictly at home, forbidden balls, sent to Sunday schools, debarred novels, and surfeited with lectures, will be perpetually thinking of how nice it must be "to have a little of what you like." And when they have the chance, of course they take a great deal too much.

This is a very pleasant and sensible time in which to live, especially for those who are young. It may be a little too fast; but the youth of the present

day are allowed such latitude of thought and action, so much of "what they like," that they cannot fail to have much more experience than the youth born fifty years ago. Grandmamma's maxim, "A little of what you like will do you no harm," is much more practised now than in those days. After all, it is only permitting nature to have a little voice in the education of the young. Fifty years ago nature was abhorred—her impulses were thrust down, her palpable hints vigorously stifled, her absolute common sense treated as insanity, and the only voice that was never regarded was nature's voice. Many lamentable instances of this fact can be remembered by people still living.

It occurred to me once as a school girl to have hospitality given me for one night at the house of strangers to all my family. I was on my way home for the holidays; and one of the daughters of the house, who was my school-fellow, being invited to stay with some friends not far from us, we were mutually to guard and escort each other on the journey. I therefore slept at her mother's house the night before. They were great people, and kept a large establishment. Though pressed to make one of the party downstairs, I modestly asked permission to remain in the schoolroom with the governess and children. One little girl of six years old attracted my attention. She was wondrously pretty, but apparently very ill. Her cheeks were the brightest scarlet from fever, her eyes were brilliant and restless, her lips parched, and she could not sit still a moment. When our tea was brought she became wild with excitement.

"I must have a cup—a whole cup," she moaned, hanging over the governess.

"You know, my dear, I dare not do it. This poor child," she continued, turning to me, "is forbidden to drink anything but a tablespoonful at a time; she has some internal complaint. It is most painful that she has no longing for anything in the world but something to drink. I only wish her mamma knew how she suffers, and how it breaks my heart to refuse her what she asks."

"Why do you not tell her? I should fancy nature says she should have a great deal to drink."

"Oh, you darling!" said the child, springing on to my knee, and kissing me vehemently; "go, go and tell mamma."

Of course I could not do that, and after a shower of tears, which she drank up as they fell, she finally hid herself under the tea-table.

"I permit her to do so," whispered the governess; "it is so hard to see the others drinking when she must not."

Her little moans went to my heart, and as if she thought I was her friend, she every now and then put up her little hot hand, and touched mine.

I could not help it then, as I am sure I could not help it now,—I covered my cup of tea with my hand, and lifted it down to her. In a moment the contents were gone. I succeeded in putting the empty cup back on my saucer without being perceived. The little hot hands kept eagerly signing for more. My second cup went the same way; and as they were good-sized schoolroom cups, I hoped the little thirsty creature was satisfied.

"How quiet you are, Nell," said the governess.

She now came from under the table smiling. She sat quiet on my knee for an hour, listening to a story. Her hands were moist, her cheeks cool, and her eyes sleepy. She fell into a deep sleep, and was undressed and put to bed without awakening. Such a thing had not occurred for weeks. And when the pretty anxious mother came up the last thing at night to see her darlings, she was told the good news.

"Madam," said the governess—who must have perceived where my last cup of tea went—"I feel sure the doctor is quite wrong in preventing Nell having as much to drink as she likes. She has had two large cups of tea, and you see the good effect."

The mother was wise enough to listen to nature's voice, and order a jug of toast-and-water to be placed by the child's bedside, in case she awoke feverish and thirsty. The next day she sent for the doctor, who replied to her remarks:

"Well, my lady, 'tis as well perhaps, now, to change the treatment. We will try the effect of letting her have as much to drink as she likes."

Nell grew up a charming woman, and has twelve children. 'Tis needless to say they all have "a little of what they like," and the doctor is not so much consulted as nature.

Another instance was that of a middy, who lay dying of a tropical fever. He longed for some porter, but his parched lips could only pronounce it like water, which the doctor said would cause death at once. A grand banquet was being given by the admiral on board the ship, to some land dignitaries, and there was but scant time to attend to the boy. He was, however, a great favourite, and distinctly remembered his messmates coming to see him before he died, and bewailing over him. To all he tried to say porter, but none understood, and he fell back, as they supposed, to die. But the banquet must be attended to, the guard of honour was wanted, and in the bustle and confusion he was thought of no more.

He was roused from the stupor into which he had fallen by hearing a sound he had longed for—the fizzing and gurgling of liquid in a bottle. He put out his feeble hand, it fell upon the stout proportions of a porter bottle. At last he had been understood! Slowly he brought his parched lips down to its mouth, and, with an expiring effort, as it seemed to him, he took a gulp. A cool elixir ran healthfully through his frame; he took another, with still happier effect. Finally he finished the bottle, sank back in a profound slumber, and awoke to life in the morning. He is now a gallant admiral himself, and doubtless gives banquets. Does he look after the servants suspiciously? For he owed his life, not to his companions' discovery that he longed for porter, but to one of the waiters having stolen an opened bottle of porter, and thought the dead boy's berth an exceedingly safe place in which to hide it until he could find a convenient moment to drink it.

If nature points out what is physically best for the ailing frame, doubtless she should also be regarded in the likes and dislikes of the temper and mind.

Those parents are most reprehensible who force a boy into a profession he does not like, or treat a girl as a wayward child who feels she is a woman, and a tender-hearted one. They must both be treated to "a little of what

they like," so that their own common sense may have room to play. It may end in the discovery, to the mutual happiness of parent and child, that "a little" was quite sufficient for them, and that "more" would do them no good.

One of the most frequent regrets of old people is, that they are about to die just as they begin to know how to live. When they think thus, they ought the more readily to permit the young to take and test "a little of what they like," as they will the sooner appraise the good and reject the bad, the earlier they are permitted to make the trial.

Those who think grandmamma's maxim dangerous are recommended to go and live for a while with people "who cannot take a little of anything." The most genial nature will mope and become mildewed under the constant pressure of a morbid and unthankful disposition. The very blessings of God are but snares, the joyousness of nature to be trampled on, and the most bewitching gaiety of a child's heart reproved as sinful. The common things of life are tortured into burdens, love is a trial, riches a trouble, children a care. If the sun shines, 'tis too hot; if clouds lower, the rain is insufferable.

The wisdom of Solomon tells us "there is a time for all things." But to the unhappy person who is so constituted as not to be able "to take a little of anything," there is no time for anything. He bewails over opportunities lost, not seeing the opportunities present; he grumbles that something he might like was not presented to his use at a time when he fancies he may have liked it, and not now, when 'tis inconvenient; and he goes on through all his life until death surprises him, and he finds, too late, that nothing ever happened so inauspiciously as this death itself. He would rather have gone on living in the world, uncomfortable as it was, than be summoned out of it just at the moment when he felt most inclined to stay.

The contemplation of such a character leads us to inquire if grandmamma's maxim, "A little of what you like will do you no harm," is only confined to the worldly point of it, to nothing but the wishes, the pleasures, the conveniences of our daily life. Methinks we might regard it in a higher, nobler light. If we take advantage of it to give us pleasure, why not use it to do us good? When we ask ourselves "a little of this will do us no harm," might we not say, "a little of this (a duty) will do us a great deal of good?" We have cause to be grateful to God for some especial mercy. Is it what we like, "to praise and thank him?" A certain duty is given us to do. Is it what we "like," to do it? A submission is demanded. Do we submit with the cheerfulness that shows we "like" to do God's pleasure as well as our own? Can we give up, when there is the necessity for it, that "little which we like," at the command of God, for the good of our neighbour?

In the midst of the fulfilment of all our wishes, in the full possession of doing all that we "like," much less a little, do we remember our Creator, and praise Him for the gift of His Son, and the comfort of His Holy Spirit? We can tell our progress in such things, by asking ourselves as continually of these higher matters as we do of the lesser ones. And in truth we may be able to use thankfully grandmamma's maxim, "A little of what you like will do you no harm," when we can at the same time assure ourselves that we love above all other things "that which is doing us good."



## MARRIED AT LAST.

Even in our ashen cold is fire, ye wrecken.—*Chaucer.*

MRS. BUNKER must have been sixty. She lived next door—and waited on an invalid old lady who never left the house. She had saved money, but chose to continue in service.

She had done many kind offices in accidental sickness for us. Her figure and face had become familiar—so strong, so kindly, so original, so erect, so perfect an incarnation of probity, without one adventitious charm, that it was quite impossible to conceive of her otherwise than exactly as she was when you saw her last. Miracles, however, do happen. The invaluable old nurse was certainly a fixture, till that early day when her mistress should need no more nursing; but one morning a remarkable-looking old lady asks an interview with my mother. It was Mrs. Bunker; and how metamorphosed! She had on a black silk gown, properly made, a handsome shawl, kid gloves, and on each side of her face large carrot curls fell in profusion on her shoulders. My mother was struck dumb at the apparition. Mrs. Bunker did not keep her long in suspense.

"I see you are surprised at the change in me, ma'am."

"Rather," my mother answered; "but always glad to see you, Mrs. Bunker."

"I'm come to take leave of you, ma'am, and thank you for all kindnesses. In fact, I'm going to be married."

"Dear me!" said my mother.

"Yes, ma'am; and you think what a fool I must be—I see you do."

My mother could not for the life of her deny it.

"Well, ma'am, all I say is, hear my story, and then tell me what you think about it."

She sat down and began:—

"When I was a girl we lived at C——. My father kept a small general shop—that is, he and my mother; she kept the shop and he drove the cart. But my mother died when I was only sixteen, and my father was going to marry again. I did not like the looks of his intended, so I thought I would get a place before she came, and have no quarrels.

"There was a very nice young man, apprenticed to a builder living close to us, and he used always to walk with me of Sundays. He was three years older than I, and coming out of his time. He was always wanting me to say I would marry him as soon as he could make a home for me; and I dare say, ma'am, I gave him too much encouragement.

"I soon got a place some miles from C——, and only saw him now and then for a little while of Sundays; until one day he came very smart, quite a buck, and asked me to come out. So I got leave. And then he went on more than ever: how he had served his time, and had good wages as journeyman, and could do very well for me, and soon he should be master himself, and so on. But I said, 'John, I respect and love you very much, and should like to be your wife, but we are very young, and you've got nothing, nor I neither,

and nothing but grief could come of it.' I was wrong, ma'am, as it fell out, and I've often thought so; but I thought I did what was best then. He was very angry—I could not help that. And when I would not alter, says he, 'Miss Bunker'—he had always called me Polly before, you know—'Miss Bunker, if you won't, some one must, for I am going to marry directly.' So I said plain, 'Pray marry when you like; I shall always respect and love you.' And about two months after he married a very respectable girl, and made a very good husband, and got on in business to have several houses of his own, and had six children, boys and girls. I was always friendly with them; and fourteen years after, when Mrs. Wake was dying, I nursed her for three weeks, poor dear, and laid her out. John, who had always been very kind to her, seemed sorry; but I didn't think he cared so much about losing her as I should have expected.

"Well, about six weeks after, I was staying with my aunt at C——, when he comes in, and says, 'Polly, you know I never loved anybody like you. You can't say I can't keep you now quite comfortable; so you'll have me now? But I said, 'No, John, I can't. I could never be a stepmother to your young children. I might have children of my own, and then folks might think I made a difference.' He begged very hard, but I would not hear of it. I'd had four offers, and got used to saying no. But I never felt as if I could marry any one but Mr. Wake. So he took up his hat, gave me a kiss, which I let him do, and said, just as he said when he first asked me, 'If you won't, some one else must. I want a mother now for my poor children.' I was glad to have it over, for it was hard work.

"I thought I had better go away, so I got a place in London as lady's-maid. I got it from seeing it in the *Times*. It was a good place—a nice young lady living with her uncle. They had a fine place in Berkshire, and travelled a good deal, and stayed about in great houses; but before the year was up my young lady got ill, and it turned to consumption. We went to Nice. She was a sweet young lady; but it was the old story—weaker and paler every day; more gentle and more loving, and her uncle breaking of his heart. He was a very good man, and sat up all night with her once or twice every week; for he used to turn me out of the room, and make me go to bed sometimes. At last she died, and was buried there. Master shut himself up for about a fortnight in his room, and no one saw him but Mr. Wabbles—that was his own man. Somehow or other he came to know that master was going on to Rome—that's the great place for Papists, you know, ma'am—and I did not want to go there; besides, I only wanted to see the master to let me leave, as I wasn't wanted any more there. At last he sent for me up to his room, and he did not say, as he used in Miss Elinor's room, 'Sit down, Polly.' He hardly looked up, but just said, 'Polly, I shall never never forget your goodness to Elinor. If any woman on earth could be a comforter in life and death it is you; will you be my wife, and comfort me?' I was so taken aback, ma'am, that I don't know exactly what I said; but I soon came round, and told him how much I respected him, and felt grateful, but that I could not accept a station in which I should always be looked down upon, and for which I wasn't fit. I told him it could not be,

and the best proof of regard I could give him would be never to say what he had told me, and to prevent him doing anything so rash while he was so cut up about dear Miss Elinor; and then I could not help crying myself, and ran out of the room. Mr. Wabbles met me crying in the passage, and I thought he had been listening at the door; but, said he, 'Why, Miss Bunker, you haven't got your warning after all you've been doing of?' 'Yes I have,' says I. 'And what has he given you for it?' 'Mr. Wabbles, he hasn't given me anything at all.' 'Oh, what a shame,' says he; 'I'd ask him, if I was you.' So I saw he had not heard.

"Two days more passed, and he sent for me again. 'Polly,' said he, 'I know you are right, but I shall never meet with your like. I will say no more about it. But you must let me show you that I have appreciated services no money could ever pay for. You know I would have given you other proofs.'

"'Sir,' I said, 'I want nothing but my wages. I am too proud, and have too much regard for you, to let you be reproached on my account; but I am not too proud to accept benefits from you if you wish it.'

"So he paid me my wages, gave me twenty pounds for my journey (I told Mr. Wabbles *that*), and then he gave me a letter, and said, 'When you get to London, take that to Messrs. — & —, and wait for an answer.' I got safely to town, and next day went to Messrs. — & —, and one of the clerks took the note, and I saw the gentleman. And he said he had got an annuity for me of forty pounds a year. I have it now; but I never knew it till that minute, and never thanked the master for it. The letter I wrote him came back to me. He went to Rome, took a fever, and died in about a week.

"I used to hear from John Wake every now and then. He soon found a very decent woman for his wife. She had no children and took good care of his, and brought them up very well; but she knew all about me and him somehow, and she wasn't like his first wife, and didn't like me, and I think that made him write less often. I could not make up my mind to marry, for plenty would have liked to have had my annuity; and I wasn't so plain then neither. And I got into a family I did not like, so I took to nursing, and spent a year in St. Bride's Hospital, and the doctors said I was the best nurse there. I understand all about it, and I like nursing, ma'am, and have done a deal of it with rich and poor; but I am getting on in life, and find taking care of old ladies and old gentlemen suits me better now. And it's profitable too, for you see I can be depended upon, and that fetches money.

"Well, I had not seen John for five or six years, and I thought perhaps we might never meet again; but one day last week who should come in upon me but himself? And about the first words that he spoke were 'Well, Polly, how are you?' 'Pretty well, thank you, John, and you look well.' 'So I am,' says he; 'and, Polly, I have plenty of money now and houses, and all my children are settled in life. I have given up the building, and only do agencies and surveying and such like, just to do something. My poor wife is gone. I didn't write to tell you; but now you can't find any pretence to refuse me a third time.'

"'No,' says I, 'John; if, now you see me, you are sure it's quite what

you wish, I'm willing to marry. You know I've always loved you and never listened to any one else. I've got enough to keep me and be beholden to no one; but I shall be happier with you, I am sure.' And so it was settled. What do you think of my choice, ma'am?"

Of course there could be nothing but congratulation on the happy issue of such a singular life as this; but the old lady still felt her defence incomplete. She pushed back the red ringlets from her red face and resumed it.

"And now, ma'am, for my dress. It's just as he wishes it, and I paid for it. His people are all very respectable, and won't think less of me for my clothes. And he seemed so pleased when I dressed up. Only that when we walked into B—— yesterday, he would go into a hair-dresser's shop and begged me to accept a wig with long curls like what I had when I was sixteen, for I never wore them after I was in service. I thought first how very foolish it was, but I thought again how much more foolish it would be to refuse the first thing John asked, when I was going to be married to him. Men are very odd, ma'am, you know that; and if he had wanted me to wear a sheepskin on my head I would have done it."

There! I can trace the history no further. A broad-shouldered old man, hale, and hearty, was going in and out next door for a few days, whom we identified with him who bought the carrot wig. I did not see the happy pair depart; but I was duly informed some days afterwards that she who had only been Mrs. Bunker by courtesy, had at last become Mrs. Wake by right.

V. E.

### ANDROMACHE.

A TOUCH upon my shoulder, a kiss upon my hair,  
And then the world was empty, and darkness everywhere,  
Except where in the dimness, a ruby-eyed Despair  
Sat glaring, glaring at me, and calling from her lair:

"Andromache, Andromache."

The evil gods will follow where Hector heads the fray,  
It irks them that a mortal should nobler be than they;  
I see their airy weapons, already poised to slay,  
I hear their backward whispers, as tauntingly they say:

"Andromache, Andromache."

How say you that my grief is shared with Hector's sire and son?

The babe has only smiles for life, his woes are not begun;

And Priam, well he knows for him all suffering is done,

Ere long he will contented call on me, his only one:

"Andromache, Andromache."

The pain is mine, as he is mine, my Hector, king, and lord;

For me alone he keeps his love, for all the world his sword;

'Twill be my name that from his lips shall be with life outpoured,

Though neither gods nor men may hear the tender dying word:

"Andromache, Andromache."

S. A. D. I.

## THE LAST LORDS OF GARDONAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DR. AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

## PART I.

ONE of the most picturesque objects in the valley of the Engadin is the ruined castle of Gardonal, near the village of Madaline. In the feudal times it was the seat of a family of barons, who possessed as their patrimony the whole of the valley, which with the castle had descended from father to son for many generations. The two last of the race were brothers; handsome, well-made, fine-looking young men, but in nature they more resembled fiends than human beings—so cruel, rapacious, and tyrannical were they. During the earlier part of his life their father had been careful of his patrimony. He had also been unusually just to the serfs on his estates, and in consequence they had attained to such a condition of comfort and prosperity as was rarely met with among those in the power of the feudal lords of the country; most of whom were arbitrary and exacting in the extreme. For several years in the latter part of his life he had been subject to a severe illness, which had confined him to the castle, and the management of his possessions and the government of his serfs had thus fallen into the hands of his sons. Although the old baron had placed so much power in their hands, still he was far from resigning his own authority. He exacted a strict account from them of the manner in which they performed the different duties he had intrusted to them; and having a strong suspicion of their character, and the probability of their endeavouring to conceal their misdoings, he caused agents to watch them secretly, and to report to him as to the correctness of the statements they gave. These agents, possibly knowing that the old man had but a short time to live, invariably gave a most favourable description of the conduct of the two young nobles, which, it must be admitted, was not, during their father's lifetime, particularly reprehensible on the whole. Still, they frequently showed as much of the cloven foot as to prove to the tenants what they had to expect at no distant day.

At the old baron's death, Conrad, the elder, inherited as his portion the castle of Gardonal, and the whole valley of Engadin; while to Hermann, the younger, was assigned some immense estates belonging to his father in the Bresciano district; for even in those early days, there was considerable intercourse between the inhabitants of that northern portion of Italy and those of the valley of the Engadin. The old baron had also willed, that should either of his sons die without children his estates should go to the survivor.

Conrad accordingly now took possession of the castle and its territory, and Hermann of the estates on the southern side of the Alps; which, although much smaller than those left to his elder brother, were still of great value. Notwithstanding the disparity in the worth of the legacies bequeathed to the two brothers, a perfectly good feeling existed between them, which promised to continue, their tastes being the same, while the mountains which divided them tended to the continuance of peace.



Conrad had hardly been one single week feudal lord of the Engadin before the inhabitants found, to their sorrow, how great was the difference between him and the old baron. Instead of the score of armed retainers his father had kept, Conrad increased the number to three hundred men, none of whom were natives of the valley. They had been chosen with great care from a body of Bohemian, German, and Italian outlaws, who at that time infested the borders of the Grisons, or had found refuge in the fastnesses of the mountains—men capable of any atrocity and to whom pity was unknown. From these miscreants the baron especially chose for his body-guard those who were ignorant of the language spoken by the peasantry of the Engadin, as they would be less likely to be influenced by any supplications or excuses which might be made to them when in the performance of their duty. Although the keeping of so numerous a body of armed retainers might naturally be considered to have entailed great expense, such a conclusion would be most erroneous, at least as far as regarded the present baron, who was as avaricious as he was despotic. He contrived to support his soldiers by imposing a most onerous tax on his tenants, irrespective of his ordinary feudal imposts; and woe to the unfortunate villagers who from inability, or from a sense of the injustice inflicted on them, did not contribute to the uttermost farthing the amount levied on them. In such a case a party of soldiers was immediately sent off to the defaulting village to collect the tax, with permission to live at free quarters till the money was paid; and they knew their duty too well to return home till they had succeeded in their errand. In doing this they were frequently merciless in the extreme, exacting the money by torture or any other means they pleased; and when they had been successful in obtaining the baron's dues, by way of further punishment they generally robbed the poor peasantry of everything they had which was worth the trouble of carrying away, and not unfrequently, from a spirit of sheer mischief, they spoiled all that remained. Many were the complaints which reached the ears of the baron of the cruel behaviour of his retainers; but in no case did they receive any redress; the baron making it a portion of his policy that no crimes committed by those under his command should be investigated, so long as those crimes took place when employed in collecting taxes which he had imposed, and which had remained unpaid.

But the depredations and cruelties of the Baron Conrad were not confined solely to the valley of the Engadin. Frequently in the summer-time when the snows had melted on the mountains, so as to make the road practicable for his soldiers and their plunder, he would make a raid on the Italian side of the Alps. There they would rob and commit every sort of atrocity with impunity; and when they had collected sufficient booty they returned with it to the castle. Loud indeed were the complaints which reached the authorities of Milan. With routine tardiness, the government never took any energetic steps to punish the offenders until the winter had set in; and to cross the mountains in that season would have been almost an impossibility, at all events for an army. When the spring returned, more prudential reasons prevailed, and the matter, gradually diminishing in interest, was at last allowed to die out without any active measures being taken.

Again, the districts in which the atrocities had been committed were hardly looked upon by the Milanese government as being Italian. The people themselves were beginning to be infected by a heresy which approached closely to the Protestantism of the present day; nor was their language that of Italy, but a patois of their own. Thus the government began to consider it unadvisable to attempt to punish the baron, richly as he deserved it, on behalf of those who after all were little worthy of the protection they demanded. The only real step they took to chastise him was to get him excommunicated by the Pope; which, as the baron and his followers professed no religion at all, was treated by them with ridicule.

It happened that in one of his marauding expeditions in the Valteline, the baron, when near Bormio, saw a young girl of extraordinary beauty. He was only attended at the time by two followers, else it is more than probable he would have made her a prisoner and carried her off to Gardonal. As it was he would probably have made the attempt had she not been surrounded by a number of peasants, who were working in some fields belonging to her father. The baron was also aware that the militia of the town, who had been expecting his visit, were under arms, and on an alarm being given could be on the spot in a few minutes. Now as the baron combined with his despotism a considerable amount of cunning, he merely attempted to enter into conversation with the girl. Finding his advances coldly received, he contented himself with inquiring of one of the peasants the girl's name and place of abode. He received for reply that her name was Teresa Biffi, and that she was the daughter of a substantial farmer, who with his wife and four children (of whom Teresa was the eldest) lived in a house at the extremity of the land he occupied.

As soon as the baron had received this information, he left the spot, and proceeded to the farmer's house, which he inspected externally with great care. He found it was of considerable size, strongly built of stone, with iron bars to the lower windows, and a strong well-made oaken door which could be securely fastened from the inside. After having made the round of the house (which he did alone), he returned to his two men, whom, in order to avoid suspicion, he had placed at a short distance from the building, in a spot where they could not easily be seen.

"Ludovico," he said to one of them who was his lieutenant, and invariably accompanied him in all his expeditions, "mark well that house; for some day, or more probably night, you may have to pay it a visit."

Ludovico merely said in reply that he would be always ready and willing to perform any order his master might honour him with; and the baron, with his men, then left the spot.

The hold the beauty of Teresa Biffi had taken upon the imagination of the baron actually looked like enchantment. His love for her, instead of diminishing by time, seemed to increase daily. At last he resolved on making her his wife; and about a month after he had seen her, he commissioned his lieutenant Ludovico to carry to Biffi an offer of marriage with his daughter; not dreaming, at the moment, of the possibility of a refusal. Ludovico immediately started on his mission, and in due time arrived at the farmer's

house and delivered the baron's message. To Ludovico's intense surprise, however, he received from Biffi a positive refusal. Not daring to take back so uncourteous a reply to his master, Ludovico went on to describe the great advantage which would accrue to the farmer and his family if the baron's proposal were accepted. Not only, he said, would Teresa be a lady of the highest rank, and in possession of enormous wealth both in gold and jewels, but that the other members of her family would also be ennobled, and each of them, as they grew up, would receive appointments under the baron, besides having large estates allotted to them in the Engadin Valley.

The farmer listened with patience to Ludovico, and when he had concluded, he replied—

"Tell your master I have received his message, and that I am ready to admit that great personal advantages might accrue to me and my family by accepting his offer. Say, that although I am neither noble nor rich, that yet at the same time I am not poor; but were I as poor as the blind mendicant whom you passed on the road in coming hither, I would spurn such an offer from so infamous a wretch as the baron. You say truly that he is well known for his power and his wealth; but the latter has been obtained by robbing both rich and poor, who had not the means to resist him, and his power has been greatly strengthened by engaging in his service a numerous band of robbers and cut-throats, who are ready and willing to murder any one at his bidding. You have my answer, and the sooner you quit this neighbourhood the better, for I can assure you that any one known to be in the service of the Baron Conrad is likely to meet with a most unfavourable reception from those who live around us."

"Then you positively refuse his offer?" said Ludovico.

"Positively, and without the slightest reservation," was the farmer's reply.

"And you wish me to give him the message in the terms you have made use of?"

"Without omitting a word," was the farmer's reply. "At the same time, you may add to it as many of the same description as you please."

"Take care," said Ludovico. "There is yet time for you to reconsider your decision. If you insist on my taking your message to the baron, I must of course do so; but in that case make your peace with heaven as soon as you can, for the baron is not a man to let such an insult pass. Follow my advice, and accept his offer ere it is too late."

"I have no other answer to give you," said Biffi.

"I am sorry for it," said Ludovico, heaving a deep sigh; "I have now no alternative," and mounting his horse he rode away.

Now it must not be imagined that the advice Ludovico gave the farmer, and the urgent requests and arguments he offered, were altogether the genuine effusions of his heart. On the contrary, Ludovico had easily perceived, on hearing the farmer's first refusal, that there was no chance of the proposal being accepted. He had therefore occupied his time during the remaining portion of the interview in carefully examining the premises, and mentally taking note of the manner in which they could be most easily entered, as he

judged, rightly enough, that before long he might be sent to the house on a far less peaceable mission.

Nothing could exceed the rage of the baron when he heard the farmer's message.

"You cowardly villain!" he said to Ludovico, "did you allow the wretch to live who could send such a message to your master?"

"So please you," said Ludovico. "What could I do?"

"You could have struck him to the heart with your dagger, could you not?" said the baron. "I have known you do such a thing to an old woman for half the provocation. Had it been Biffi's wife instead you might have shown more courage."

"Had I followed my own inclination," said Ludovico, "I would have killed the fellow on the spot; but then I could not have brought away the young lady with me, for there were too many persons about the house and in the fields at the time. So I thought, before acting further, I had better let you hear his answer. One favour I hope your excellency will grant me, that if the fellow is to be punished you will allow me to inflict it as a reward for the skill I showed in keeping my temper when I heard the message."

"Perhaps you have acted wisely, Ludovico," said the baron, after a few moments' silence. "At present my mind is too much ruffled by the villain's impertinence to think calmly on the subject. To-morrow we will speak of it again."

Next day the baron sent for his lieutenant, and said to him—

"Ludovico, I have now a commission for you to execute which I think will be exactly to your taste. Take with you six men whom you can trust, and start this afternoon for Bormio. Sleep at some village on the road, but let not one word escape you as to your errand. To-morrow morning leave the village—but separately—so that you may not be seen together, as it is better to avoid suspicion. Meet again near the farmer's house, and arrive there, if possible, before evening has set in, for in all probability you will have to make an attack upon the house, and you may thus become well acquainted with the locality before doing so; but keep yourselves concealed, otherwise you will spoil all. After you have done this, retire some distance, and remain concealed till midnight, as then all the family will be in their first sleep, and you will experience less difficulty than if you began later. I particularly wish you to enter the house without using force, but if you cannot do so, break into it in any way you consider best. Bring out the girl and do her no harm. If any resistance is made by her father, kill him; but not unless you are compelled, as I do not wish to enrage his daughter against me. However, let nothing prevent you from securing her. Burn the house down or anything you please, but bring her here. If you execute your mission promptly and to my satisfaction, I promise you and those with you a most liberal reward. Now go and get ready to depart as speedily as you can."

Ludovico promised to execute the baron's mission to the letter, and shortly afterwards left the castle accompanied by six of the greatest ruffians he could find among the men-at-arms.

Although on the spur of the moment Biffi had sent so defiant a message to

the baron, he afterwards felt considerable uneasiness as to the manner in which it would be received. He did not repent having refused the proposal, but he knew that the baron was a man of the most cruel and vindictive disposition, and would in all probability seek some means to be avenged. The only defence he could adopt was to make the fastenings of his house as secure as possible, and to keep at least one of his labourers about him, whom he could send as a messenger to Bormio for assistance, and to arouse the inhabitants in the immediate vicinity, in case of his being attacked. Without any hesitation all promised to aid Biffi in every way in their power, for he had acquired great renown among the inhabitants of the place for the courage he had shown in refusing so indignantly the baron's offer of marriage for his daughter.

About midnight, on the day after Ludovico's departure from the castle, Biffi was aroused by some one knocking at the door of his house, and demanding admission. It was Ludovico, for after attempting in vain to enter the house secretly, he had concealed his men, determining to try the effect of treachery before using force. On the inquiry being made as to who the stranger was, he replied that he was a poor traveller who had lost his way, and begged that he might be allowed a night's lodging, as he was so weary he could not go a step further.

"I am sorry for you," said Biffi, "but I cannot allow you to enter this house before daylight. As the night is fine and warm you can easily sleep on the straw under the windows, and in the morning I will let you in and give you a good breakfast."

Again and again did Ludovico plead to be admitted, but in vain; Biffi would not be moved from his resolution. At last, however, the bravo's patience got exhausted, and suddenly changing his manner he roared out in a threatening tone, "If you don't let me in, you villain, I will burn your house over your head. I have here, as you may see, plenty of men to help me to put my threat into execution," he continued, pointing to the men, who had now come up, "so you had better let me in at once."

In a moment Biffi comprehended the character of the person he had to deal with; so, instead of returning any answer, he retired from the window and alarmed the inmates of the house. He also told the labourer whom he had engaged to sleep there to drop from a window at the back and run as fast as he could to arouse the inhabitants in the vicinity, and tell them that his house was attacked by the baron and his men. He was to beg them to arm themselves and come to his aid as quickly as possible, and having done this, he was to go on to Bormio on the same errand. The poor fellow attempted to carry out his master's orders; but in dropping from the window he fell with such force on the ground that he could only move with difficulty, and in trying to crawl away he was observed by some of the baron's men, who immediately set on him and killed him.

Ludovico, finding that he could not enter the house either secretly or by threatenings, attempted to force open the door, but it was so firmly barricaded from within that he did not succeed; while in the meantime Biffi and his family employed themselves in placing wooden faggots and heavy articles of furniture against it, thus making it stronger than ever. Ludovico, finding he



could not gain an entrance by the door, told his men to look around in search of a ladder, so that they might get to the windows on the first floor, as those on the ground floor were all small, high up, and well barricaded, as was common in Italian houses of the time; but in spite of all their efforts no ladder could be found. He now deliberated what step he should next take. As it was getting late, he saw that if they did not succeed in effecting an entrance quickly the dawn would break upon them, and the labourers going to their work would raise an alarm. At last one man suggested that as abundance of fuel could be obtained from the stacks at the back of the house they might place a quantity of it against the door and set fire to it; adding that the sight of the flames would soon make the occupants glad to effect their escape by the first-floor windows.

The suggestion was no sooner made than acted upon. A quantity of dry fuel was piled up against the house door to the height of many feet, and a light having been procured by striking a flint stone against the hilt of a sword over some dried leaves, fire was set to the pile. From the dry nature of the fuel, the whole mass was in a blaze in a few moments. But the scheme did not have the effect Ludovico had anticipated. True, the family rushed towards the windows in the front of the house, but when they saw the flames rising so fiercely they retreated in the utmost alarm. Meanwhile the screams from the women and children—who had now lost all self-control—mingled with the roar of the blazing element, which, besides having set fire to the faggots and furniture placed within the door, had now reached a quantity of fodder and Indian corn stored on the ground floor.

Ludovico soon perceived that the whole house was in flames, and that the case was becoming desperate. Not only was there the danger of the fire alarming the inhabitants in the vicinity by the light it shed around, but he also reflected what would be the rage of his master if the girl should perish in the flames, and the consequent punishment which would be inflicted on him and those under his command if he returned empty-handed. He now called out to Biffi and his family to throw themselves out of the window, and that he and his men would save them. It was some time before he was understood, but at last Biffi brought the two younger children to the window, and, lowering them as far as he could, he let them fall into the arms of Ludovico and his men, and they reached the ground in safety.

Biffi now returned for the others, and saw Teresa standing at a short distance behind him. He took her by the hand to bring her forward, and they had nearly reached the window, when she heard a scream from her mother, who being an incurable invalid was confined to her bed. Without a moment's hesitation, the girl turned back to assist her, and the men below, who thought that the prey they wanted was all but in their hands, and cared little about the fate of the rest of the family, were thus disappointed. Ludovico now anxiously awaited the reappearance of Teresa—but he waited in vain. The flames had gained entire mastery, and even the roof had taken fire. The screams of the inmates were now no longer heard, for if not stifled in the smoke they were lost in the roar of the fire; whilst the glare which arose from it illumined the landscape far and near.

It so happened that a peasant, who resided about a quarter of a mile from Biffi's house, had to go a long distance to his work, and having risen at an unusually early hour, he saw the flames, and aroused the inmates of the other cottages in the village, who immediately armed themselves and started off to the scene of the disaster, imagining, but too certainly, that it was the work of an incendiary. The alarm was also communicated to another village, and from thence to Bormio, and in a short time a strong band of armed men had collected, and proceeded together to assist in extinguishing the flames. On their arrival at the house, they found the place one immense heap of ashes—not a soul was to be seen, for Ludovico and his men had already decamped.

The dawn now broke, and the assembled peasantry made some attempt to account for the fire. At first they were induced to attribute it to accident, but on searching around they found the dead body of the murdered peasant, and afterwards the two children who had escaped, and who in their terror had rushed into a thick copse to conceal themselves. With great difficulty they gathered from them sufficient to show that the fire had been caused by a band of robbers who had come for the purpose of plundering the house; and their suspicion fell immediately on Baron Conrad, without any better proof than his infamous reputation.

As soon as Ludovico found that an alarm had been given, he and his men started off to find their horses, which they had hidden among some trees about a mile distant from Biffi's house. The daylight was just breaking, and objects around them began to be visible, but not so clearly as to allow them to see for any distance. Suddenly one of the men pointed to an indistinct figure in white some little way in advance of them. Ludovico halted for a moment to see what it might be, and, with his men, watched it attentively as it appeared to fly from them.

"It is the young girl herself," said one of the men. "She has escaped from the fire; and that was exactly as she appeared in her white dress with her father at the window. I saw her well, and am sure I am not mistaken."

"It is indeed the girl," said another. "I also saw her."

"I hope you are right," said Ludovico; "and if so, it will be fortunate indeed, for should we return without her we may receive but a rude reception from the baron."

They now quickened their pace, but, fast as they walked, the figure in white walked quite as rapidly. Ludovico, who of course began to suspect that it was Teresa attempting to escape from them, commanded his men to run as fast as they could in order to reach her. Although they tried their utmost, the figure, however, still kept the same distance before them. Another singularity about it was, that as daylight advanced the figure appeared to become less distinct, and ere they had reached their horses it seemed to have melted away.

(To be continued.)

## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

## PART II.—HIS YOUTH.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## ROBERT INTERCEDES.

ONE thing that troubled Robert a little on this his first return home, was to find, as every one, I presume, in similar circumstances has found, that almost all the surroundings of his childhood had deserted him. There they were, as of yore, but they seemed to have nothing to say to him—no remembrance of him. It was not that everything looked small and narrow; it was not that the streets he saw from his new quarters—for, as I have said, he was now promoted to the spare room—were awfully still after the roar of Aberdeen—looked indeed like those of a dead village, such as was lately to be seen in the desolated regions of Sutherlandshire, where sheep and grouse have taken the place of men, women, and children—and a passing cart seemed to have a fear of the noise itself made in the stillness; it was not that where he used to take three steps at a time up the stair, he could now take five; but it was that, like old people who let the present fleet by them like a phantasma, everything seemed to be conscious only of the past and care nothing for Robert now. The very chairs with their inlaid backs had an embalmed look about them, and stood as in a dream. He could pass even the walled-up door without emotion now, for all the feeling that had been gathered about the handle that admitted him to the paradise of Mary St. John's presence had transferred itself to the brass bell-pull at the street door.

But one day, after standing for a while at the window which looked into the main street, thinking how it was down there that he had first seen the beloved form of Ericson, a certain old mood began to revive in him. He had been working at quadratic equations all the morning; it was now nearly one o'clock; he had been foiled in the attempt to find the true algebraic statement of a very tough question involving various ratios, and vexed with himself, he had risen to look out of the window, as the only *zeitvertreib* that he could find. It was one of those rainy days of spring which it needs a hopeful mood to distinguish from autumnal ones—dull, depressing, persistent; there might be sunshine in Mercury or Venus—but on the earth could be none, between his right hand round by India and America to his left; and certainly there was none between. Such a mood had been very common to him once, as it is to all sensitive people who have not learned by faith in the Everlasting to rule over their own moods; and naturally enough his thoughts now turned to that part of the house in which he had suffered most—his old room in the garret, in which he had not yet been. He had shrunk from visiting it. He now turned away from the window, went up the steep stairs, curved with one sharp corkscrew turn, pushed the door, which clung unwillingly to

the floor, and entered. It was a nothing of a place—with a window that looked only to heaven. There was the empty bedstead against the wall, where he had so often kneeled, sending forth vain prayers to a deaf heaven. Had they indeed been vain prayers, and to a deaf heaven? or had they been prayers which a hearing God must answer, not according to the haste of the praying child, but according to the calm course of his own infinite law of love?

Here, somehow or other, the things about him did not seem so much absorbed in the past, not although his mother's workbox lay behind those still untroubled rows of letters and accounts tied in bundles with red tape—almost awful in their lack of interest and their non-humanity: there is scarcely anything that absolutely loses interest save the records of money. And, strange to say, the side of that bed drew him to kneel down: he did not yet believe that prayer was in vain. If God had not answered him before, that gave no certainty that he would not answer him now. It seemed indeed as rational as it had ever seemed that God would answer the man that cried to him. From what could this come but from the fact that God had been answering him all the time, although he had not recognized his gifts as answers? Nor had his intercourse with Ericson, and his familiarity with his doubts, done anything to quench his thirst after a true relation to God. For Ericson's, like his own, were true and good and reverent doubts, not merely consistent with but in a great measure springing from devoutness and aspiration. Surely such doubts are far more precious in the sight of God than many a man's faith.

This time, however, Robert did not kneel. He turned towards the shelves where lay the bundles of letters, removed some of them, and once more took out his mother's little box.

There lay the miniature where he had left it; and there too lay the bit of paper, brown and dry, with the hymn and the few words of sorrow written below it. He looked at the portrait, but did not open the folded paper. Then first he thought that there might be something more yet in the box: what he had taken for the bottom seemed to be a tray. And he was right. He lifted it by two little ears of ribbon, and there, underneath, lay a letter addressed to his father, in the same handwriting as that of the hymn—his mother's doubtless. But it was sealed with a brown wax, full of spangles, impressed with a bush of something—he could not tell whether rushes or reeds or flags. What was to be done with it? He dared not open it. His holy mother's words to his erring father must be sacred even from the eyes of their son. But what fitter messenger to bear it to its destination than himself? Was it not for this that he had now been guided to where it lay hid? He had long regarded the finding of his father as the first duty of his coming manhood, and now it seemed as if his mother justified the feeling, and had given him this letter to carry to him, who, however he might have erred, was still dear to her. He replaced it in the box, but the box no more on the forsaken shelf with its dreary barricade of soulless records. He carried it with him to his new room, and deposited it in the bottom of his box which stood in a corner, and which henceforth he kept always locked: there

lay as it were the pledge of his father's salvation and his mother's redemption from an eternal grief. Then he turned to his equation, and to his wonder found that it had cleared itself up: he worked it out in five minutes. Betty came to tell him that the dinner was ready, and he went down, peaceful and hopeful, to his grandmother.

While at home, Robert never worked in the evenings, and that was well. It was bad enough to have to meet the alternative at college of either working all day and half the night too, or being only a middling student. So Nature had a chance with him at Rothieden. Blessings on the wintry blasts that broke into the first youth of summer, and made him feel what summer was! Blessings on the cheerless days of rain, and even sleet and hail, that would shove the reluctant year back into January! The fair face of spring, with her tears dropping upon her quenchless smiles, peeped in suppressed triumph from behind the growing corn and the budding shallows on the river bank. Nay, even when the snow came once more in defiance of calendars, it was but a back-ground from which the near genesis should "stick fiery off." He had many a lonely walk after his lessons with Miss St. John: there was no one at Rothieden to whom his heart and intellect were both sufficiently drawn to make a close friendship possible. He had one companion, however: Ericson had let him have his papers till they met again, and some of these he always took with him. It was the influence of these that more than anything but Nature herself led him into sympathy with her in all her moods; a sympathy which, even in the stony heart of London, he not only did not lose but never ceased to feel. Even there a breath of wind would not only breathe upon him, it would breathe into him; and a sunset seen from the Strand was lovely as if it had hung over rainbow seas. On his way home he would often go into one of the shops where the neighbours would be congregated and hold a little talk; and although with Miss St. John filling his heart, his friend's poems his imagination, and geometry and algebra his intellect, great would be the contrast between his own inner mood and the words by which he kept up human relations with his townfolk, yet in after years he counted it one of the greatest blessings of a lowly birth and education that he knew the hearts and feelings of a class whom to understand one must have associated with them in youth. He would not have had a chance of knowing such as these if he had been the son of Dr. Anderson and born in Aberdeen. It is far easier to learn the feelings and habits of higher conditions in life than to extend one's experience down the social scale.

One lovely evening of early summer, Miss St. John had dismissed him sooner than usual, and he had wandered out for a walk. After a round of a couple of miles, he came back to the town by a fir-wood, through which went a pathway. Perhaps it was not by accident that he returned this way; perhaps he had heard Mary St. John say that she wanted to go and see the wife of a labourer who lived at the end of this path. He had taken his precious manuscript leaves with him. Now in the heart of the trees it was almost too dark to read; but coming to a spot where they stood away from each other a little space, and the blue sky looked in from above with just one cloud floating in and the rose of the sunset just fading out of it, he sat



down on a little mound of moss that had gathered over the ancient stump of a long-felled tree close by the footpath, and drew out his papers. He became so much absorbed in his reading, for the words brought his friend near as in a mirror, and he seemed almost to hear his voice as he read, that he was not aware of an approach till the rustle of silk startled him, and lifting up his eyes, he saw Miss St. John a yard or two from him on her way home. He rose.

"It's almost too dark to read now, isn't it, Robert—especially writing?" she said.

"Ah!" said Robert, rising, "I know this writing so well I could read it by moonlight. I wish I might read some of it to you. You *would* like it."

"May I ask whose it is, then? Poetry, too!"

"It's Mr. Ericson's. But I'm feared he wouldna like me to read it to anybody but myself. And yet ——"

"I don't think he would mind me," said Miss St. John. "I do know him a little, you know. It's not as if I were *quite* a stranger. Did he tell you not?"

"No. But then he never thought of such a thing. I don't know if it's fair, for they are carelessly written, and there are words and lines here and there that I am sure he would alter if he cared for them as hair."

"Then if he doesn't care for them, he won't mind my hearing them. There!" she said, seating herself on the stump; "you sit down on the grass and read me—one at least."

"You'll remember they've never been corrected?" said Robert, not knowing what he was doing, and so fulfilling his destiny.

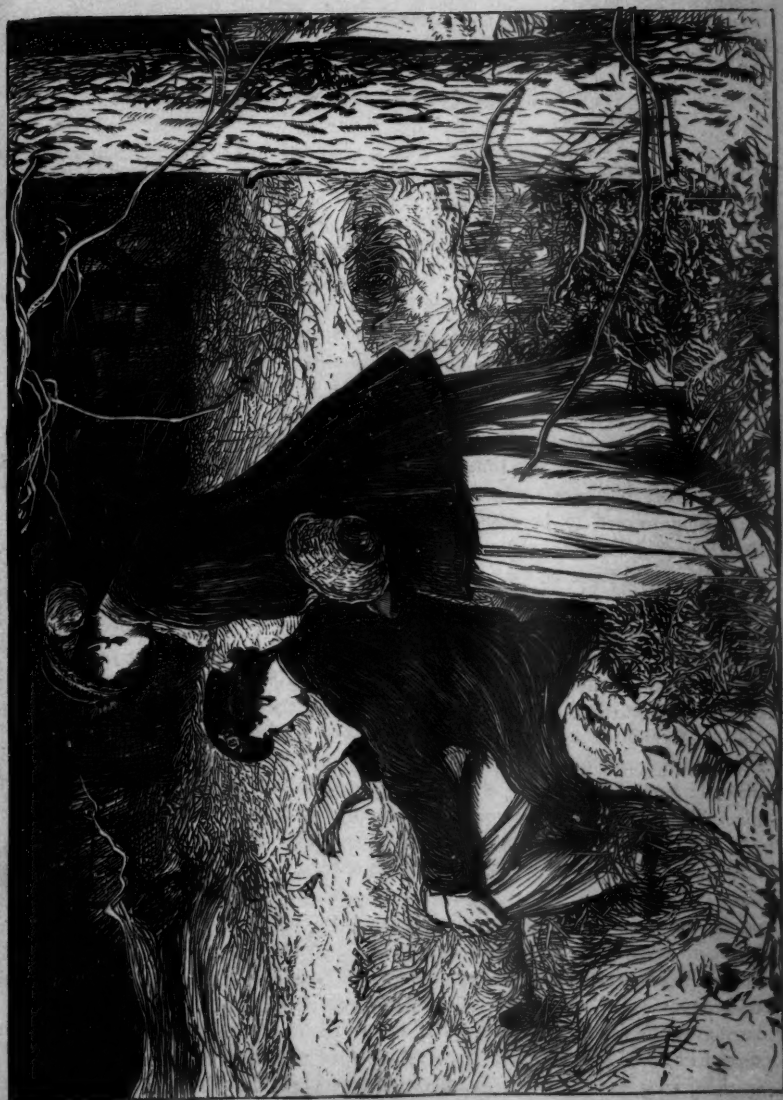
"I will be as jealous of his honour as you are," answered Miss St. John, gaily.

Robert threw himself on the grass at her feet, and began :—

#### MY TWO GENIUSES.

One is a slow and melancholy maid :  
I know not if she cometh from the skies,  
Or from the sleepy gulfs, but she will rise  
Often before me in the twilight shade  
Holding a bunch of poppies, and a blade  
Of springing wheat : prostrate my body lies  
Before her on the turf, the while she ties  
A fillet of the weed about my head ;  
And in the gaps of sleep I seem to hear  
A gentle rustle like the stir of corn,  
And words like odours thronging to my ear :  
"Lie still, beloved, still until the morn ;  
Lie still with me upon this rolling sphere,  
Still till the judgment—thou art faint and worn."

The other meets me in the public throng :  
Her hair streams backward from her loose attire ;  
She hath a trumpet and an eye of fire ;  
She points me downward, steadily and long—  
"There is thy grave—arise, my son, be strong !



SEWING MACHINES

FLORANCE

THE NEW MACHINES

FOR THE YEAR 1900

NEW LINE

THE NEW MACHINES

FOR THE YEAR 1900

THE NEW MACHINES

FOR THE YEAR 1900

THE NEW MACHINES

THE NEW MACHINES

FOR THE YEAR 1900

THE NEW MACHINES

FOR THE YEAR 1900

Hands are upon thy crown ; awake, aspire  
 To immortality ; heed not the lyre  
 Of the enchantress, nor her poppy-song ;  
 But in the stillness of the summer calm,  
 Tremble for what is godlike in thy being.  
 Listen awhile, and thou shalt hear the psalm  
 Of victory sung by creatures past thy seeing ;  
 And from far battle-fields there comes the neighing  
 Of dreadful onset, though the air is balm."

Maid with the poppies, must I let thee go ?  
 Alas ! I may not ; thou art likewise dear ;  
 I am but human, and thou hast a tear,  
 When she hath nought but splendour, and the glow  
 Of a wild energy that mocks the flow  
 Of the poor sympathies which keep us here.  
 Lay past thy poppies, and come twice as near,  
 And I will teach thee, and thou too shalt grow ;  
 And thou shalt walk with me in open day  
 Through the rough thoroughfares with quiet grace ;  
 And the wild-visaged maid shall lead the way,  
 Timing her footsteps to a gentler pace,  
 As her great orbs turn ever on thy face,  
 Drinking in draughts of loving help alway.

Finding that Miss St. John did not speak, Robert said—

"War ye able to follow what he's efter?"

"Quite well, I assure you," answered Miss St. John, with a tremulousness in her voice which she sought to hide, but which Robert was delighted to hear as proof of his friend's success.

"But they're not a' so easy to follow, I can tell ye, mem. Just hearken to this—

When the storm was proudest,  
 And the wind was loudest,  
 I heard the hollow caverns drinking down below ;  
 When the stars were bright,  
 And the ground was white,  
 I heard the grasses springing underneath the snow.

Many voices spake—  
 The river to the lake,  
 And the iron-ribbed sky was talking to the sea ;  
 And every starry spark  
 Made music with the dark,  
 And said how bright and beautiful everything must be.

"That line, mem," remarked Robert, "'s only jist scrattin in, as gin he had no intention to lea' 't there, only to keep room for anither in its place. But we'll jist gang on wi' the lave o' 't. I ouchtna to hae interruptit it.

When the sun was setting,  
 All the clouds were getting  
 Beautiful and silvery in the rising moon ;  
 Beneath the leafless trees  
 Wrangling in the breeze,  
 I could hardly see them for the leaves of June.

When the day had ended,  
 And the night descended,  
 I heard the sound of streams that I heard not through the day,  
 And every peak afar,  
 Was ready for a star,  
 And they climbed and rolled around until the morning gray.

Then slumber soft and holy  
 Came down upon me slowly ;  
 And I went I know not whither, and I lived I know not how ;  
 My glory had been banished,  
 For when I woke it vanished,  
 But I waited on its coming, and I am waiting now.

"There!" said Robert, as he ended, "can ye mak' anything o' that, Miss St. John?"

"I don't say I can, as poetry," she answered; "but I think I could put it all into music."

"But surely you maun have some idea of what it's about before you can do that."

"Yes; but I have some idea of what it's about, I think. Just lend it to me, and by the time we have our next lesson you will see whether I haven't done something with it that will show you I understand it. I shall take good care of it," she added, with a smile, seeing Robert's reluctance to part with it. "It doesn't matter my having it, you know, now that you've read it to me. I want to make you do it justice.—But it's quite time I were going home. Besides, I really don't think you could read any more."

"Well, perhaps it's better not to try, though I do ken them nearly by hert; for I might blunder, and I wadna like that. Will you let me go home with you?"

"Certainly, if you like," said Miss St. John, and they walked towards home.

Robert opened the fountain of his love to his friend, and let it gush out like a river from a mountain-side. He talked on and on about him, with admiration, gratitude, and devotion; and Miss St. John was glad of the veil of the twilight over her face as she listened, for the boy's enthusiasm trembled through her as the wind through an Æolian harp. Poor Robert! He did not know, I say, what he was doing, and so was fulfilling his sacred destiny.

"Bring your manuscripts when you come next," said Miss St. John—adding with apparent coolness, "I like your friend's verses very much, and should like to hear more of them if you don't mind."

"I'll be sure an' bring—some o' them," answered Robert, in great delight that he had found some one to sympathize with him in his worship of Ericson, and that some one Miss St. John.

By this time they had reached the town, and Miss St. John, calling to mind that propensity of human nature called *gossip*, especially as it happened to be the eve of a market, when all the shopkeepers, the fatigues of whose day were over, would be standing in a speculative mood at their doors, probably surrounded by a little group of friends and neighbours, grew shy of showing herself on the square with Robert, and proposed that they should part, giving as a by-the-by reason that she had a little shopping to do as she went



home. Too simple to suspect the real reason, but accustomed to yield everything to her at once, Robert bade her good night, and took another way. In the door of a shop stood William MacGregor, the weaver, looking at nothing and doing nothing. When he saw Robert, however, he wakened up, laid hold of him by the button, and drew him in.

"Come in, lad," he said, "an' tak' a pinch." As he spoke he took from his pocket his *mull*, made of the end of a ram's horn, and presented it to Robert, who accepted the pledge of friendship. People were generally afraid of MacGregor, because he had a biting satire at his command, amounting even to wit, which found vent in verse—not altogether [despicable even from a literary point of view. The only person MacGregor was afraid of was his own wife; for upon her, from lack of comprehension, his keenest irony fell like water on a duck's back. He liked Robert.

With some effort he drew himself upon the counter, saying in a judicial tone—

"Weel, an' hoo's the mathematics, Robert?"

"Thrivin'," answered Robert, falling into his humour.

"Weel, that's verra weel. Duv ye min', Robert, hoo, whan ye was about the age o' aucht year aul', ye cam' to me ance at my shop about something yer gran'mither, honest woman, wantit, an' I, by way o' gettin' my fun o' ye, said to ye, 'Robert, ye hae grown desperate; ye're a man clean: ye hae gotten the breeks on.' An' says ye, 'Ay, Mr. MacGregor, I want naething noo but a watch an' a wife'?"

"I doobt I hae forgotten a' about it, Mr. MacGregor," answered Robert; "but I hae made some progress sin' syne, for Dr. Anderson, jest afore I cam' hame, gae me a watch; an' a fine crater it is, for it aye does its best, an' sae I excuse it's shortcomin's."

"There's just ae thing," said MacGregor, "that I cannot excuse in a watch. Gin a watch gangs ower fest, ye fin' 't oot. Gin a watch gangs ower slow, ye fin' 't oot, an' ye can aye calculate upo' 't correck eneuch for maitters sublunairy, as Mr. McCleary says. An' gin a watch stops a'thegither, ye ken it's failin' an' ye ken whaur it sticks, an' a' 'at ye say's 'Tut, tut, deil hae 't for a watch.' But there's ae thing that God nor man canna bide in a watch, an' that's whan it stan's still for a bittock, an' syne gangs on again. Ay, ay! tic, tic, tic! wi' a fair face an a lecin' hert. It wad gar ye believe it was a' richt, and time for anither tumbler, whan it's twal o'clock, an' the kirkyaird fowk thinkin' 'about risin'. Fegs, I had a watch o' my father's, an' I regairdit it wi' a reverence like a human bein': the second time it played me that pliskie, I dang out its guts upo' the loupin'-on-stane at the door o' the chop. But lat the watch sit: whaur's the wife? Ye canna be a man yet wantin' the wife, by yer ain statement."

"The watch cam' unsought, Mr. MacGregor, an' I'm thinkin' sae maun the wife," answered Robert, laughing.

"Preserve me for ane frae a wife that comes unsought," returned the weaver. "But, my lad, there may be some wives that winna come whan they *are* sought. Preserve me frae them too!—Noo, maybe ye dinna ken what I mean, but tak' ye tent what ye're about; an' dinna ye think 'at ilka bonnie lass 'at may like to haud a wark wi' ye is jist ready to mairry ye

aff han' whan ye say 'Noo, my dawtie.'—An' ae word more, Robert. Young men, especially braw lads like yersel', 's unco ready to fa' in love wi' women fit to be their mithers. An' sae ye see——"

What Mr. Macgregor was going to say Robert saw, was interrupted by the entrance of a girl. She had a shawl over her head, notwithstanding that it was summer weather, and came in hesitatingly as if she were not quite at one with herself as to what she should buy. She drew near to a boy standing behind the counter. Robert could not help thinking, though he had got but one glimpse of her face through the dusk, that he had seen her before. Suddenly the vision of an earthen floor with a pool of brown sunlight upon it, bare feet, brown hair, and soft eyes, mingled with a musk odour wafted from Arabian fairyland, rose before him: it was Jessie Hewson.

"I ken that lassie," he said, and moved to get from the counter where he too had seated himself.

"Na, na," said the manufacturer in a whisper, laying, like the Ancient Mariner, a brown skinny hand of restraint upon Robert's arm, "na, na, never min' her. Dinna speyk to ilka lass 'at ye ken. Poor thing!" he added, "she's been doin' something wrang, to gang slinkin' about i' the gloamin' like a baukie, wi' her plaid ower her heid. Dinna fash wi' her."

"Nonsense!" returned Robert, with some indignation. "What for suldna I speik till her? She's a decent lassie—a dochtor o' James Hewson, the cottar at Bodyfauld. I ken her fine."

He said this in a whisper; but the girl left the shop with a perturbation which the dimness of the late twilight could not conceal. Robert hesitated no longer, but, heedless of the louder expostulations of MacGregor, followed her. She was speeding away down the street, but he took longer strides than she, and soon came up with her. When she heard his step near her, she drew her shawl closer about her head, and increased her pace.

"Jessie!" said Robert, in a tone of expostulation. But she made no answer. Her head sunk lower on her bosom, and she hurried yet faster. He gave a long stride or two and laid his hand on her shoulder. She stood still trembling.

"Jessie, dinna ye ken me—Robert Faukner? Dinna be feart at me. What's the maitter wi' ye, 'at ye winna speik till a body? Hoo's a' the fowk at hame?"

Jessie burst into a violent fit of crying, cast one look into Robert's face, and fled. What a change was in that face! The peach-colour was gone from her cheek; it was pale and thin, and her eyes were hollow, with dark shadows under them, not cast there by the light of the west in which he had overtaken her, but by the set of another sun. A foreboding of the truth seized on Robert's heart, the tears rushed up into his eyes, and the form of Mary St. John, moving gracious and strong, clothed in worship, and the dignity which is its own defence, rose beside that of poor Jessie Hewson, her bowed head shaken with sobs, and her weak limbs urged to ungraceful flight. Whose business was it to save the weak? Was it not the business of the strong? As if urged by the vision of an eternal truth, he walked straight to Miss St. John's door. The maid said she had just come in, and was gone up to take her things off.

"I want to speak till her, Isie," said Robert.

"She'll be doon in a minit."

"But isna yer mistress i' the drawin'-room? I dinna want to see her."

"Ow, weel," said the girl, who was ready to enter into anything that savoured of a secret, and gave a more rosy sympathy than she would have accorded had she known that Robert was going to plead for a girl and not for himself, "jist rin up the stair, an' chap at the door o' her room."

With the simplicity of a child, never doubting that what a girl told him to do must be all right, Robert sped up the stair, with his heart going like a fire-engine. He had never approached her room from this side, but he went straight to her door. He knocked.

"Come in," said Mary St. John, never doubting that it was the maid, and Robert stood before her.

There was little light in the room, just a chamber-candle on the dressing-table, by which she was brushing her hair. Robert was seized with awe. If he might have done as he would, he would have kneeled before her—not to beg forgiveness, he did not think of that—but to worship, as a man may worship a woman. It is only a strong, pure heart like Robert's that can ever feel truly the divine mystery of womanhood. A flush swept over Miss St. John's face, and sank away again, leaving it pale. It was not that she thought once about her own condition, with her hair loose on her shoulders, but she did think with dismay of what Robert might be thinking. She was soon relieved, however. Robert, what between his contemplated intercession, the dim vision of Mary's lovely face between the masses of her hair, and the lavender odour that filled the room—perhaps also a faint suspicion of impropriety sufficient to give force to the rest—was thrown back into the abyss of his mother-tongue, and out of this abyss he now talked like a Behemoth. Mary stood with her ivory brush in her right hand uplifted, and a great handful of hair in her left.

"Robert!" she said, in a tone which, had he not been so eager after his end, he might have interpreted as one of displeasure.

"Ye maun hearken till me, mem.—Whan I was oot at Bodyfauld," he began methodically, and Mary, bewildered, gave one hasty brush to the handful of hair, and then stood still: she could imagine no connection between this meeting and their late parting. "Whan I was oot at Bodyfauld, there was a bonnie lassie there, the dochter o' Jeames Hewson, an honest cottar, wi' Shakspeare an' the Arabian Nights upon a shelf i' the hoose wi' 'im. I gaed in ae day whan I was na weel; an' she jist ministert to me, as nane ever did but yersel', mem. An' she was that kin' an' mither-like to the wee bit greitin' bairnie 'at she had to tak' care o' cause her mither was oot wi' the lave shearin'! Her face was jist like simmer day, an' weel I likit the luik o' the lassie!—I met her again the nicht. Ye never saw sic a change. A white face, an' nothing but greetin' to come oot o' her. She ran frae me as gin I had been the deil himsel'. An' the thocht o' you, sae bonnie an' straucht an' gran' cam' ower me."—Here yielding to a mastering impulse, Robert kneeled and took the hem of her garment and put it to his lips.—"Dinna be angry at me, Miss St. John, but be mercifu' to the lassie. Wha's to help her that can no more luik a man i' the

face, but the clear-e'd lass that wad luik the sun himsel' oot o' the lift gin he daured to say a word against her. It's ae woman that can uphau'd anither. Ye ken what I mean, an' I needna say mair."

He rose and turned to leave the room.

Bewildered and doubtful, Miss St. John hardly knew what to think. But she must say something.

"You haven't told me where to find her, or what I'm to do with her."

"I'll fin' oot whaur she bides," he said, moving again towards the door.

"But what am I to do, Robert?" she repeated.

"That's your pairt. Ye maun fin' oot what to do. I canna tell ye that; but gin I was you, I wad gie her a kiss to begin wi'. She's nane o' yer brazen-faced hizzies, yon. A kiss wad be the savin' o' her."

"But you may be—But I have nothing to go upon. She would resent any interference of mine."

"Nae fear o' that. She's past resentin' anything. She was gaein' about the toon like ane o' the deid 'at hae naething to say to onybody, an' naeboddy onything to say to them. Gin she gangs on like that she'll no be livin' lang."

That night Jessie Hewson disappeared. A mile or two up the river, under a high bank, from which the main current had receded, lay an awful, swampy place—full of reeds, except in the middle where was one round space full of dark water and mud. Near this Jessie Hewson was seen about an hour after Robert had thus pled for her with his angel.

It is not wonderful that the occurrence should make a deep impression upon Robert. The last time that he was at Bodyfauld, James and his wife were as cheerful as usual, and gave him a hearty welcome. Jessie was in service, and doing well, they said. The next time he opened the door of the cottage it was as if he had been entering a haunted tomb. Not a smile was in the place. James's cheeriness was all gone. He was sitting at the table with his head leaning on his hand, and his bible open before him, but he was not reading a word. His wife was moving listlessly about. In fact they looked just as Jessie had looked that night—as if they had died long ago, but somehow or other could not get into their graves and be at rest. The child Jessie had nursed with such care was toddling about, looking rueful, as if he had lost something. George had gone to America, and the whole joy of the family had been wiped off the face of the earth. I will not linger over this wretchedness. The subject was not referred to again between Miss St. John and Robert. The next time he saw her, he knew by her pale troubled face that she had heard the report that filled the town; and she knew by his silence that she was right in conjecturing that it had reference to the same girl of whom he had spoken to her. Their music would not go right that evening; and Robert left Mary with a sense of discomposure and disappointment he had never felt before. She was *distracte*, and he was troubled. It was a week or two before things fell into their old way between them. When the change came, his love to her grew on his being like a spring-tide flowing up from the Atlantic with a strong west wind behind it. The turn of the tide was thus:—

He was accompanying her with his violin. He made blunders, and her

playing was disheartened. They stopped as if by common consent. All at once she broke out with something Robert had never heard before. But he soon found that it was Ericson's poem to which she was giving the exposition of her music. The peculiarity of it was this, that ever through a troubled harmony there ran a tiny silver thread of melody that came from far away, and did not belong to the body of the music. It was the sound of the caverns drinking from the tempest overhead, of the grasses growing under the snow, of the music of the stars with the dark, and the streams filling the night with the sounds that the day had quenched, the whispering call of the dreams left behind in "the fields of sleep"—in a word, the central peace pulsing through the storms of the outer world. Robert stood and listened with deep delight. At length her voice took up the theme. Strengthened and excited by music, that silvery thread became song, and she led it through all the opposing harmonies of the accompaniment to the peaceful solution of a close in which the only sorrow was that of music's self, the very condition of whose life is an "endless ending." When Miss St. John finished she found Robert kneeling by her side. His head drooped over her knee as she turned round from the instrument. Deeply moved by her own music, she laid her hand on the youth's curls that clustered behind his head, bethought herself, rose, said "Good-night, Robert," and left the room. Robert wandered out as in a dream, and at midnight found himself on a solitary hill-top, seated in the heather, with a few tiny fir-trees two feet high round about him, and the sounds of a wind, ethereal as the stars overhead, flowing through their branches: he heard the sound of it, but it did not touch him.

Where was God? In him and his question.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

##### ERICSON IS LEFT BEHIND.

THE time at length drew near when, with his gathered bundle of mathematics, he must betake himself once more to the University. If Mary St. John had been at all an ordinary person, and if, notwithstanding, Robert had been in love with her, he would have done very little with mathematics or anything else. But although she now *possessed* him, although at times he only knew himself as loving her, yet there was such a high mountain air of calm about her, such an outgoing divinity of peace, such a largely-moulded harmony of being, that he could not love her otherwise than grandly. Often and often it was for her sake that, weary with loving her, he would yet turn towards his work, and, to be worthy of her, or rather, for he never dreamed of being worthy of her, to be worthy of leave to love her, would try to forget her enough to lay hold of some abstract truth of lines, angles, or symbols. A strange way of being in love, reader? You think so? I would there were more love like it: the world would be a few centuries nearer its redemption if a millionth part of the love in it were of this sort. All I insist, however, on my reader's believing is, that it showed, in a youth like Robert, not less but more love that he could go against love's sweetness for the sake of love's greatness. So while, literally, not figuratively, Robert would kiss and had kissed the place where her foot had trod—I know that once he rose



from such a kiss, sat down, and began "to trace the hyperbola by means of a string."

It had been arranged between Ericson and Robert, in Miss Napier's parlour, the old lady knitting beside, that Ericson should start, if possible, a week earlier than usual, and spend the difference with Robert at Rothieden. But then the old lady had opened her mouth and spoken. And I firmly believe, though little sign of tenderness passed between them, it was with an elder sister's feeling for Letty's admiration of the "lan'less laird," that she said as follows:—

"Dinna ye think, Mr. Ericson, it wad be but fair to come to us neist time? Mistress Faulkner, honest lady, an' lang hae I kent her, 's no sae auld a frien' to you, Mr. Ericson, as oorsel's—no offence to her, ye ken. A'body canna be frien's to a'body, ane as lang's anither, ye ken."

Robert saw the justice of Miss Napier's words. He spoke at once.

"Deed I maun alloo, Miss Naper, it's only fair. Ye see, Mr. Ericson, I culd see as muckle o' ye almost, the tae way as the tither. Miss Naper mak's me welcome as weel's you."

"And I *will* mak' ye welcome, Robert, as lang's ye're a gude lad, as ye are, and gang na efter—nae ill gait. But lat me hear o' yer doin' as sae mony young gentlemen do, especially whan they're ta'en up by their rich relations, and public-hoose as this is, I'll close the door o' 't i' yer face."

"Bless me! Miss Naper," said Robert, "what hae I dune to set ye at me that gait? Faith, I dinna ken what ye mean."

"Nae mair do I, laddie. I hae naething against ye whatever. Only ye see auld fowk luiks aheid, an' wad fain be as sure o' what's to come as o' what's gane."

"Ye maun bide for that, I doobt," said Robert.

"Laddie," retorted Miss Napier, "ye hae mair sense nor ye hae any richt till. Haud the tongue o' ye. Mr. Ericson 's to come here neist."

And the old lady laughed such good humour into her stocking-sole, that the foot destined to wear it ought never to have been cold—while it lasted, at least. And so it was settled. And a week before Robert was going to start for Aberdeen, Ericson walked into The Boar's Head. Half an hour after that, Crookit Caumill was shown into the ga'e room with the message to Maister Robert that Maister Ericson was come, and wanted to see him.

Robert pitched Hutton's Mathematics into the grate, sprung to his feet, all but embraced Crookit Caumill on the spot, and was deterred only by the perturbed look the man wore. Crookit Caumill was a very human creature, and hadn't a fault but the drink, Miss Napier said. And very little of that he would have had if she had been as active as she was willing.

"What's the maitter, Caumill?" said Robert.

"Ow, naething, sir."

"What gars ye look like that, than?"

"Ow, naething. But jist whan Miss Letty cried doon the close upo' me, I saw 'at she had her awpron till her een, an' sae I thocht something maun be wrang; but I jist hadna the hert to speir."

Robert darted to the door, and, without cap or hat, rushed to the inn, leaving Caumill describing *iambi* on the road behind him.

When he reached The Boar's Head there was nobody to be seen. He darted up the stairs to the room where he had first waited upon Ericson.

Three or four maids stood at the door. He went in, with a dreadful fear at his heart. Two of the sisters and Dr. Gow stood by the bed.

Ericson lay upon it, pale-faced, clear-eyed, still. Only his cheek was flushed. All looked round when Robert entered.

"Robert," said the doctor, "keep your friend here quiet. He's broken a blood-vessel—walked too much, I suppose. We'll get him all right soon, I hope; but we can't be too careful in the meantime. Keep him quiet—that's the main thing. He mustn't speak a word."

So saying he took his leave.

Ericson held out his thin worn hand. Robert grasped it without a word. Ericson's lips moved as if he would speak.

"Dinna speik, Mr. Ericson," said Miss Letty, whose tears were flowing unheeded down her cheeks, "Dinna speik. We a' ken what ye mean an' what ye want wi'oot that."

Then she turned to Robert, and said in a whisper,

"Dr. Gow wadna hae ye sent for; but I kent weel eneuch 'at he wad be a' the quaieter gin ye war here. Jist gie a chap upo' the flure gin ye want onything, an' I'll be wi' ye in twa seconds."

Then Miss Letty and Miss Lizzy went away. Robert drew a chair beside the bed, and once more was nurse to his friend. He soon found that the doctor had already bled him at the arm: such was the ordinary mode of treatment then.

Scarcely was he seated, when Ericson said, with a smile flickering over his thin face,

"Robert, my boy."

"Dinna speak," said Robert, in alarm; "dinna speak, Mr. Ericson."

"Nonsense," said Ericson, feebly. "They're making a work about nothing. I've done as much twenty times since I saw you last, and I'm not dead yet. But I think it's coming."

"What's coming?" asked Robert, rising in alarm.

"Nothing," answered Ericson, soothingly; "only death.—I should like to see Miss St. John once before I die. Do you think she would come to see me just before I die?"

"You shall see her, Mr. Ericson—that is if you be quiet. If you talk, Miss Letty won't let even me come near you. Oh, Mr. Ericson! if you die I shan't care to live."

Then, bethinking himself that this was not the way to keep Ericson quiet, he repressed his emotion, sat down behind the curtains of the bed, and did not speak. Ericson soon fell fast asleep. When Robert saw that he was asleep, he left the room, and telling Miss Letty that he would be back presently, went to his grandmother.

How could he go to Aberdeen without Mr. Ericson! If he were to die, he would be left without a guide. And yet Robert, not knowing it, was as much of a guide to Ericson as Ericson was to him. The questioning of two may just give the needful points by which the parallax of a heavenly truth may be obtained.

His grandmother put on her black silk bonnet at once, took her green umbrella, and went to see Miss Napier, in order that they might hold a consultation together, for each paid due honour to the experience of the other. Robert did not go with her, but went to communicate his anxiety to Miss St. John.

"Mr. Ericson's here," he said.

Her face flushed. Robert had never seen her look so beautiful.

"He's verra ill," he added.

Her face grew pale—very pale.

"He asked if I thought you would go and see him, if he were going to die."

A sunset flush, but faint as on the clouds of the east, rose over her pallor.

"I will go at once," she said, rising.

"Na, na," said Robert, hastily. "We maun manage't. It's no to be dune a' in a hurry. For ae thing, Dr. Gow says he maunna speak ae word; and for anither, there's Miss Letty 'at 'll jist be like a watch-dog to haud a'boddy oot ower frae'im. We maun bide oor time. But gin ye'll gang, that 'll content him i' the meantime. I'll tell him."

"I will go any time he likes," she said, sinking rather than sitting down again. "Is he very ill?"

"I'm afraid he is. I doubt I'll have to go to Aberdeen without him."

And so it was. A week after, though Ericson was better, his going was out of the question altogether. Robert wanted to stay with him, but he would not hear of it. He would follow him in a week or so, he said, and Robert must start fair with the rest of the *semies*. No one who saw him, however, could think that he would leave his bed in a week, not to say take a journey. He alone was hopeful, if hope it could be called, when, I do believe he would rather die than live. But he looked well with his flushed face and bright gray eyes.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SHARGAR ASPIRES.

It was with a very dreary heart that Robert got on the box-seat of the mail-coach—it was yet drearier when he got down at the Royal Hotel in the street of Bon Accord—and it was dreariest of all when he turned his back on Ericson's, and entered his own room at Mrs. Fyvie's.

Shargar had met him at the coach. Poor Shargar! Robert had scarcely a word to say to him. And Shargar felt almost as dreary as Robert when he sat down and laid his head on the table without a word.

"What's the maitter wi' ye, Robert? Gin ye dinna speyk to me, I'll cut my throat. I will, faith!"

"Haud yer tongue wi' yer nonsense, Shargar. Mr. Ericson's deein'."

"O Lord!" said Shargar, and sat down, and said nothing more for the space of ten minutes.

Then he spoke again:—

"He hadna you to tak' care o' him, Robert. Whaur is he noo?"

"At The Boar's Heid."

"That's weel. He'll be weel leikit efter there—that's a comfort."

"A body wad like to hae their ain han' in 't, Shargar."

"Ay. I wiss we had him here to work for again."

The ice of trouble was now broken, and the stream of talk flowed more freely.

"Hoo are ye gettin' on at the schule, man?"

"Nae that ill. I was at the heid o' my class yesterday for five meenits."

"An' hoo did ye like it?"

"Man, it was fine. I thocht I was a gentleman a' at ance."

"Haud ye at it, man," said Robert, from the height of age and experience, "and maybe ye *will* be a gentleman some day."

"Is 't possible, Robert? A crater like me grow intil a gentleman?"

"What for no?" returned Robert.

"Eh, man!" said Shargar, who stood up, sat down again, and said no more.

"For ae thing," resumed Robert, after a pause, during which he had been pondering upon the possibilities of Shargar's future—"for ae thing, I doobt whether Dr. Anderson wad hae ta'en ony fash aboot ye, gin he hadna thocht ye had the makin' o' a gentleman i' ye."

"Eh, man!" said Shargar, who stood up, and sat down—all over again.

No more was said on the subject that evening.

Next day Robert went to see Dr. Anderson, and told him about Ericson. The doctor shook his head, as doctors have done in such cases from Æsculapius downwards. Robert pressed no further questions.

"Will he be taken care of where he is?" asked the doctor. "How will he feel about being at an inn? Has he any money, do you think?"

"I hae nae doobt he has some, for he's been teachin' a' the summer. The like o' him maun an' will work whether they're fit or no."

"Well at all events, you write, Robert, and give him the hint that he's not to fash himself about money, for I have more than he'll want. And you may just take the hint yourself at the same time, Robert, my boy," he added in, if possible, a yet kinder tone.

Robert's way of showing gratitude then must have been much the same as it was afterwards. He constantly returned kindness with faith.

"Gin I be in ony want, doctor, I'll jist rin to ye at ance. An' gin I want ower muckle ye maun jist say *na*."

"That's a good fellow. You take things as a body means them."

"But hae ye naething ye wad like me to do for ye this session, sir?"

"No. I won't have you do anything but your work. You have more to do than you had last year. Mind your work, and as often as you get tired over your books, shut them up and come to me. You may bring Shargar with you sometimes, but we must take care and not make too much of him all at once."

"Ay, ay, Doctor. But he's a fine crater, Shargar, an' I dinna think he'll be that easy to blaud. What do you think he's turnin' ower in that reid heid o' his noo?"

"How should I know? There is something to come out of that red head, though, I do think. What is it?"

"Whether it be possible for him ever to be a gentleman. Noo I tak' that for a good sign i' the likes o' him."

"No doubt of it. What did you say to him?"

"I tellt him 'at hoo I didna think ye wad hae ta'en sae muckle fash gin ye hadna had some houps o' the kin' aboot him."

"You said well. Tell him from me that I expect him to be a gentleman. And by the way, Robert, do try a little, as I think I said to you once before, to speak English. I don't mean to give up Scotch, you know."

"Weel, sir, I *have* been tryin'; but what *am* I to do whan ye speyk to me as gin ye war my ain father. I canna min' upo' a word o' English whan ye do that."

Dr. Anderson laughed, but his eyes glittered while he laughed.

Robert found Shargar busy over his Latin version. Without more than a word of greeting, he took his own books and sat down. A few moments after, Shargar lifted his head, stared a while at Robert, and then said,

"Duv ye raily think it, Robert?"

"Think what? What are ye haverin' at?"

"Duv ye think 'at I ever *could* grow intil a gentleman?"

"Dr. Anderson says he expects 't o' ye."

"Eh, man!"

A long pause followed, and Shargar spoke again.

"Hoo am I to begin, Robert?"

"Begin what?"

"To be a gentleman."

Robert, like Brutus, scratched his head, but in order to become oracular.

"Speyk the truth," he said at last.

"I'll do that. But what aboot—my father?"

"Naeboddy 'll cast up yer *father* to ye. Ye need hae nae fear o' that."

"My mither, than?" suggested Shargar, with hesitation.

"Ye maun haud yer face to the fac'."

"Ay, ay. But gin they said onything, ye ken—aboot *her*."

"Gin ony man-boddy says a word agen yer mither, ye maun jist knock him doon upo' the spot."

"But I michtna be able."

"Ye could try, ony gait."

"He micht knock *me* doon, ye ken."

"Weel, gae doon than."

"Ay."

This was all the instruction Robert ever gave Shargar in the duties of a gentleman. And I doubt whether Shargar sought further enlightenment by direct question of any one. He worked harder than ever; grew cleanly in his person, even to fastidiousness; tried to speak English; and a wonderful change gradually, but rapidly, passed over his outer man. He grew taller and stronger, and as he grew stronger, his legs grew straighter, till the defect of approximating knees, which had been the consequence of hardship during growth, all but vanished. His hair became darker, and the albino look less remarkable, though still his presence reminded one of a vegetable grown in a cellar.

And now things fell into the routine of college and school; for Dr. Anderson thought it better Shargar should have another year at the grammar school before going to college. Robert now occupied Ericson's room, and



left his own to Shargar, doubting much in his heart whether his friend would ever require his again. He heard every week from Miss St. John—writing only to tell him about Ericson. Her accounts varied much; but on the whole he got a little better as the winter went on. She said that the good women at The Boar's Head paid him every attention: she did not say that almost the only way to get him to eat was to carry him delicacies which she had prepared with her own hands.

Miss St. John had soon overcome the jealousy with which Miss Letty at first regarded her interest in their guest, and before many days had passed she would walk in and go up the stair to his room without seeing a creature, except one of the sisters happened to be there, which was not unfrequently the case. How they met and the degrees by which their intimacy grew I cannot communicate to my reader, for of these events lying on the boundary of my story, I have received very insufficient information; but as to the general mental condition of the two in relation to each other, I can hazard a tolerable conjecture. I have already hinted at an early disappointment of Miss St. John. She had grown greatly since, and her estimate of what she had lost had altered very considerably—I believe altered a good deal more rapidly since she became acquainted with Ericson. I do not doubt that she would have found the young man she thought she was in love with in the days gone by a very commonplace person now. The heart which she had considered dead to the world had, even before that stormy night in the old house, begun to expostulate against its owner's mistake, by an assertion of very fair indifference to that portion of its past history. It is no wonder that to her large nature the simplicity, the suffering, the patience, the imagination, the grand poverty even of Ericson should be irresistibly attractive. Add to this that she became his nurse, and that she soon saw he was not indifferent to her—and if she fell in love with him as only a full-grown woman can love, without Ericson's *lips* saying anything that might not by Love's jealousy be interpreted as only of grateful affection, there is no reason can be given why she should not.

And what of Marjory Lindsay? Ericson had not forgotten her. But the brightest star must grow pale as the sun draws near; and with Ericson there were two suns rising at once on the low sea-shore of life whereon he had been pacing up and down moodily for now nearly three-and-twenty years—"counting the dewy pebbles," not one of which he had found to be a topaz, though he suspected the worth of many, and listening evermore to the unprogressive rise and fall of the tidal waves, all talking of the eternal, all unable to reveal it: there was the sunrise of love and the sunrise of death. Mysie and he had never met. She pleased his imagination; she touched his heart with a helplessness he was helpless to meet, because she gave him no return, no sweet willing invitation to draw near to the shrine of her beauty: he admired, and loved through his admiration. He broke no faith to her, for he had never offered any save in looks; and had he offered it in words she would not have received it. His love to her had been kept up partly by anxiety, by a feeling of what she might be. Think of discovering on his death-bed that a woman was not necessarily a delicate plant that had to have its light and heat mea-

sured, its moisture and food weighed out to it; but that a woman as well as a man might be a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land! A strong she-angel with mighty wings, Mary St. John came behind him as he fainted out of life, tempered the burning heat of the Sun of Death, and laid him to sleep in the cool twilight of her glorious shadow. Think of his finding, in the stead of trouble about a wilful thoughtless girl, repose and protection and motherhood in a great-hearted woman!

For Ericson's sake, knowing nothing of course as to how matters were going at The Boar's Head, Robert made some little effort to preserve the acquaintance of Mr. Lindsay and his daughter. But he had no knowledge of history, and therefore could hardly keep up a conversation with Mr. Lindsay, while he dared not attempt commending himself in any way to Mysie—she showed herself so utterly indifferent to him even in the way of common friendship. He told her of Ericson's illness, and how he could not finish his studies that session: she said she was sorry to hear it, and looked as if she was thinking about something else, as no doubt she was. Robert could never get within a certain atmosphere of—what shall I call it? *overtedness* that surrounded her. She had always lived in a dream of unrealities; and now this dream was promising, to her credulous fancy, to dawn into a truth and absorb common life and all its poor concerns, as Moses' rod devoured the rods of the Egyptian soothsayers.

One evening Shargar was later than usual in coming home from the walk, or ramble rather, without which, unlike Robert, he never could settle down to his work. He knocked at Robert's door.

"Whaur do ye think I've been, Robert?"

"Hoo suld I ken, Shargar?" answered Robert, who was puzzling over a problem.

"I hae been haein' a glaiss wi' Jock Mitchell."

"Wha's Jock Mitchell?"

"My brither Sandy's groom, as I tellt ye afore."

"Ye dinna think I can min' a' your havers, Shargar. Whaur was the comin' gentleman whan ye gaed to drink wi' a chield like that, wha, gin my memory serves me, ye tauld me yersel' was i' the mids o' a' his maister's deevilry?"

"Yer memory serves ye weel enouch to be doon upo' me," said Shargar. "But there's a bit wordy 'at they read at the cathedral kirk the last Sunday 'at's stucken to me as gin there was something by ordinar' in't."

"What's that?" asked Robert, pretending to go on with his calculations all the time.

"Ow, nae muckle; only this: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.—I took a lesson frae the Welsh giant—was 't Blunderbore they ca'd him? an' poored the maist o' my glaiss doon my breist. It wasna like ink; it wadna du my sark ony ill."

"But what garred ye gang wi' 'im at a'? He wasna fit company for a gentleman."

"A gentleman's some saft gin he be ony the waur o' the company he

gangs in till. There may be rizzons, ye ken. He needna du' as they du. Jock Mitchell was airin' Reid Rorie an' Black Geordie. An' says I—for I wantit to ken whether I was sic a breme-buss (*broom-bush*) as I used to be—says I, 'Hoo are ye, Jock Mitchell?' An' says Jock, 'Fine that. What the deevil are ye?' An' says I, 'Nae mair o' a deevil nor yersel', Jock Mitchell, or Alexander, Baron Rothie, either—though maybe that's no little.' 'Preserve me!' cried Jock, 'it's Shargar.' 'Nae mair o' that, Jock,' says I. 'Gin I bena a gentleman, or a' be dunc,—an' there I stack, for I saw I was a great fule to lat oot anything o' the kin' to Jock. And sae he seemed to think, too, for he brak' oot wi' a great guffaw; an' to win ower't, I jined, an' leuch as gin naething was farrer aff frae my thochts than ever bein' a gentleman. 'Whaur do ye pit up, Jock?' I said. 'Oot by here,' he answert, 'at Luckie Maitlan's.'—'That's a queer place for a baron to put up, Jock,' says I.—'There's rizzons,' he said, an' laid his forefinger upo' the side o' s nose, o' whilk there was hardly eneuch to haud his finger ohn gane intil the opposit ee. 'We're no far frae there,' says I—an' deed I can hardly tell ye, Robert, what garred me say sae, but, I jist wantit to ken what that gentleman-brither o' mine was efter; 'tak the horse hame—I'll jist loup upo' Black Geordie—an' we'll hae a glaiss thegither. I'll stan' treat.' Sae he gae me the bridle, an' I lap on. The deevil tried to get a moufu' o' my hip, but, faith! I was ower swack for 'im; an awa we rade."

"I didna ken 'at ye culd ride, Shargar."

"Hoots! I cudna help it. I was aye takin' the horse to the watter at The Boar's Heid, or The Royal Oak, or Lucky Happit's at The Aucht an' Furty. An' that's hoo I cam' to ken Jock sae weel. We war guid eneuch frien's whan I didna care for leein' or sweirin', an' sic like."

"But what on earth did ye want wi' 'im noo?"

"I tell ye I wantit to ken what that ne'er-do-weel brither o' mine was aboot. I had seen the horses stan'in' aboot twa or three times i' the gloamin', and Sandy maun' be aboot ill gin he be aboot anything hearty like."

"What can it matter to you, Shargar, what a man like that is about?"

"Weel, ye see, Robert, my mither aye brought me up to ken a' 'at fowk was aboot, for she said ye culd never tell whan it micht turn oot to the weel-faur o' yer advantage—gran' words—I wonner whaur she forgathert wi' them. But she was a terrible wuman, my mither, and she kent a heap o' things, mair nor was' gude for her to ken, maybe. She gaed aboot the country sae muckle, an' they say the gipsies she gaed amang 's a dreadfu' auld fowk, an' hae the wisdom o' the Egyptians 'at Moses wad hae naething to do wi'."

"Whaur is she noo?"

"I dinna ken. She may turn up ony day."

"There's ae thing though, Shargar: gin ye want to be a gentleman, ye maunna gang keekin' that gait intil ither fowk's affairs."

"Weel, I maun gie't up. And I winna say a word mair aboot what Jock Mitchell tellt me aboot Lord Sandy."

"Ow, say awa'."

"Na, na; ye wadna like to hear aboot ither fowk's affairs. My mither tellt me 'at he did verra ill efter Watterloo till a fremit (*stranger*) lass at

Brussels. But that's neither here nor there. I maun set about my version, or I winna get it dune the nicht."

"What is Lord Sandy after? Why do you make such a mystery of it?" said Robert, authoritatively, and in his best English.

"'Deed I culdna mak' naething o' 'm. He winkit an' he mintit (*hinted*) an' gae me to unnerstan' 'at the rascal was efter some lass or ither, but wha—my lad was as dumb 's the graveyard about that. Gin I culd only win at that, maybe I culd play him a plisky. But he coupit ower three glasses o' whusky, an' the mair he drank the less he wad say. An' sae I left him."

"Well, take care what you're about, Shargar. I don't think Dr. Anderson would like you to be keeping such company," said Robert; and Shargar went to his own room and his version.

Towards the end of the session Miss St. John's reports of Ericson were worse. The first days of spring did him no good. Yet he was very hopeful himself, and thought he was getting better fast. Every relapse he regarded as temporary; and when he was a little better, thought he had recovered his original position entirely. It was some little relief to Miss St. John to communicate her anxiety to Robert.

The session drew towards a close. Again Robert got prizes. In the evening of the distribution, intending to go home the next day, he went to see Dr. Anderson, who gave him five sovereigns—gold being still a rare sight in Scotland. Robert little thought in what service he was about to spend them.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ROBERT IN ACTION.

It was late when he left Dr. Anderson's. As he walked through the Gallowgate, an ancient narrow street, full of low courts, some one touched him upon the arm. He looked round. It was a young woman. He turned without speaking to walk on.

"Mr. Faulkner," she said, in a trembling voice. Robert thought he had heard it before.

"I don't remember you," he said. I can't see your face. Tell me who you are."

She returned no answer, but stood with her head aside. He could see that she trembled.

"What do you want with me—if you won't tell me who you are?"

"I want to tell you something," she said; "but it's sae cauld, I canna speyk here. Come wi' me."

"I won't go with you without knowing who you are and where you're going to take me."

"Dinna ye ken me?" she said, pitifully, turning a little towards the light of a gas-lamp, and looking up in his face.

"It canna be Jessie Hewson!" said Robert, turning cold at the sight of the pale worn face of the girl.

"I was Jessie Hewson ance," she said, "but naebody here kens me by

that name but yersel'. Will ye come in? There's no a crater i' the hoose but mysel'."

Robert turned at once. "Go on," he said.

She led the way, and he followed her—up a narrow stone stair between two houses, apparently the only mode of reaching rooms in the roof. A door high up in the gable admitted them. The boards bent so much that Robert feared the floor would fall under him.

"Bide ye there, sir, till I fess a licht," she said. This was Robert's first introduction to a region of human life with which he became familiar afterwards.

"Mind hoo ye gang, sir. There's nae flurin' there. Haud i' the middle, close efter me, or ye'll gang throu'."

She led him into a room, with nothing in it but a bed, a table, and a chair. On the table lay a half-made shirt. In the bed lay a little child—a tiny baby, fast asleep. It had been locked up alone in the dreary garret while the mother was out. Robert approached the bed to look at it more nearly, for his heart felt very warm to poor Jessie.

"A bonnie bairnie," he said.

"Isna he, sir? Think o' his comin' to me! Nobody can tell the mercy o' 't. Isna it strange that the verra sin sud bring an angel frae haven upo' the back o' 't to uphaud an' restore the sinner? Fowk thinks it's a punishment; but eh me! it's a mercifu' ane. It's a wonner he didna think shame to come to me. He cam' to beir my shame."

Robert was struck with amazement. She talked of her sin with a meek openness that sounded very strange. She looked her shame in the face and said it was hers. Had she been less weak and worn, perhaps she could not have spoken thus. But the sight of Robert was like home to her, and she seemed to have no feeling that she was talking to a young man. A little pause followed, from which she started as at a sudden remembrance.

"But what am I about!" she said. "I didna fess ye here to speyk aboot mysel'. He's efter mair mischeef, and gin onything cud be dune to haud him frae 't——"

"Who is it you mean, Jessie?" interrupted Robert.

"Lord Rothie. He's gaein' aff the nicht in Skipper Hornbeck's boat to Antwerp, I think they ca' 't, an' a bonnie young leddy wi' 'im. They war to sail wi' the first o' the munelicht. Surely I'm ower late," she added, going to the window. "Na, the mune canna be up yet."

"Na," said Robert, "I dinna think she rises muckle afore twa o'clock. But hoo ken ye? Are ye sure o' 't? It's an awfu' thing to think o'."

"To convenue ye, I maun jist tell ye the truth. The hoose we're in hasna a gude character. We're middlin' dacent up here; but the lave o' the place is dreadfu'. Eh for the bonnie leys aboot Bodysfauld! Gin ye see my father, tell him 'at I'm nane waur than I was."

"They think ye're droont i' the Dyer's Pot, as they ca' 't."

"There I am again!" she said—"miles awa' an' nae time to be lost! My lord has a man they ca' Mitchell. Ower weel I ken him. There's a wuman doon the stair 'at he comes to see whiles; an' twa or three nights ago I heard them talkin' an' laughin' thegither. They war baith some fou I'm thinkin'.



I cudna tell ye a' 'at they said. That's a punishment noo, gin ye like—'at ye maun see and hear the warst o' yer ain ill doin's. The wratch tellt the wuman a' hantle o' his lord's secrets. Ay, he tellt her aboot me, an' hoo I had gane and droont mysel'. I could hear maist ilka word 'at he said; for ye see the flurin' here 's no verra soun', and I was jist 'at I cudna help hearkepin'. He 's aff the nicht, as I tell ye. It's a queer road to tak' for the likes o' him; but he maun want to keep it a' quaiet. Gin onybody wad but tell her what kin' o' a man the baron is, an' hoo mony een he's made sair wi' greitin'!"

"Hoo's that to be dune?" said Robert.

"I dinna ken. But I hae been watchin' to see you ever sin' syne. I hae seen ye gang by mony a time. Ye're the only man I ken 'at I could speyk till aboot it. Ye maun think what ye can do. Only the warst o' 't is I canna tell wha she is or whaur she bides."

"What can I do, than? I dinna see what's to be dune."

"Cudna ye watch them aboard, an' slip a letter intil her han'? It micht stop it. Or ye cud gie 't to the skipper to gie her. I can think o' naething ither."

"I ken the skipper weel eneuch. He's a verra respectable man. I 'maist think gin he kent what the baron was efter, he wadna tak' him on board."

"That wad do little guid. He wad only hae her aff some ither gait."

"Weel," said Robert, rising, "I'll awa' hame, an' think aboot it as I gang. —Wad ye tak a feow shillin's frae an auld frien?" he added, with hesitation, putting his hand in his pocket.

"Na—no a baubee," she answered. "Naebody sall say 'at it was for mysel' 'at I took ye into sic a place. It's no a place for a young gentleman to put his fit in. Come efter me, an' min' whaur ye pit doon yer feet. It's no sicker."

She led him to the door. He bade her good night.

"Tak' care ye dinna fa' gaein' doon the stair. It's maist as steep 's a wa'."

As Robert came from between the houses, he thought he caught a glimpse of a man in a groom's dress going in at the street door of the same house.

What was he to do? Even as an adventure the affair was attractive—but to save a young girl from certain misery—that indeed was worth doing! It roused all the natural knighthood in him. Would it do to write? Would not that be a sneaking way of it? He would confront the baron himself. What good would that do?—He went home talking thus to himself, with the resolution already though scarce consciously formed of asking Shargar's advice.

He lost no time in telling him the story.

"I was sure he was up to some deevilry or ither," said Shargar. "I can tell ye the verra hoose he maun be gaein' to tak' her frae."

"Ye vratch! what for didna ye tell me that afore?"

"Ye wadna hear aboot ither fowk's affairs. Na, not you! But I think some fowk has no richt to be traitit wi' consideration. The verra stanes they say 'll cry oot ill secrets like brither Sandy's."

"Whase hoose is 't? Do ye ken wha bides in 't?"

"Na; I dinna ken. I only saw him come oot o' 't ance, and Jock

Mitchell was haudin' Black Geordie roun' the neuk. It canna be far frae Mr. Lindsay's, Mr. Ericson's frien's."

"Come and lat me see 't direckly," cried Robert, starting up, with a terrible foreboding at his heart.

They were in the street in a moment. Shargar led the way by a country lane to the top of the hill on the right, and then turning to the left, they reached the backs of some houses—a region unknown to Robert. "Can they be the backs of the houses that stand at the top of those gardens?" he thought.

"This is the hoose," said Shargar.

Robert rushed into action at once. He knocked at the door. Mr. Lindsay's Jenny opened it.

"Is yer mistress in, Jenny?" asked Robert.

"Na. Ay. The maister's gane to Bors Castle."

"It's Miss Lindsay 'at I want to see."

"She's up in her ain room wi' a sair heid."

Robert looked her hard in the face, and knew she was lying.

"I want to see her verra partic'lar," he said.

"Weel, ye canna see her," returned Jenny, angrily. "I'll tell her onything."

Concluding that nothing was to be gained by longer parley with her, but continuing uncertain whether Mysie was in the house or not, Robert turned to Shargar, who had remained silent behind him, took him by the arm and walked away with him, but said nothing till they heard Jenny shut the door of the house: she had been looking after them.

"Ye're sure that's the hoose, Shargar?"

"As sure's deith, and may be surer, for I saw him come oot wi' my ain een."

"Weel, Shargar, it's grown something awfu' noo. It's Miss Lindsay as sure as ye say. Was there iver sic a villain as that Lord Rothie!"

"I disoun 'im, frae this verra 'oor," said Shargar, solemnly.

"But something maun be dune. We maun jist awa' to the quay, an' see what we can fin' oot. Syne we cud watch there till they cam'. I wonner hoo's the tide."

"The tide's risin'. They'll never try to win oot till it's slack watter. Forbye 'at the Amphitrite, for as braid 's she is, and her bows modelled efter the cheeks o' a resurrection-cherub upo' a gravestane, draws a heap o' watter; an' the bar they say 's waur to win ower nor usual. It's been gatherin' again."

As they spoke the boys were making for the new town, eagerly. They resolved to go into a public-house, just opposite where the Amphitrite lay, and there to write a letter, and either watch for a chance of giving it to Miss Lindsay, or leave it with Captain Hoornbeek. Before they reached the river a thick, small rain, called in England a Scotch mist, began to fall. This rendered the night still darker, so that they could scarcely see the vessels from the pavement on the other side of the quay, along which they hurried to avoid the cables, rings, and stone posts that made its margin difficult and even dangerous in the dim light. When they came to the Smack Inn they crossed right over to reach the Amphitrite. A growing fear kept

them silent as they approached her berth. It was empty. The two lads turned and stared at each other.

One of those amphibious animals that loiter about the borders of the water was seated on a stone, probably fortified against the rain by the whisky inside him, smoking.

"Whaur's the Amphitrite, Alan?" asked Shargar, for Robert was dumb with disappointment and rage.

"Half doon to Stonehive by this time, I'm thinkin'," answered Alan. "For a brewin' tub like her, she fummles awa' nae ill wi' a licht win' astarn o' her. But I'm doobtin' afore she wins across the herrin-pond her fine passengers 'll win at the boddom o' their stamacks. It's like to blaw a bonnetfu', and she rows awfu' in ony win'. I dinna think she cud capsize, but for wamlin' she's waur nor a bairn wi' the grips."

The boys had let him talk on in absolute helplessness. There was nothing more to be done. But Alan was in a talkative mood.

"Fegs! gin the win' gathers a bit," he resumed, "I wadna wonner gin they wad be glad to win ashore at Stanehive. I heard auld Horny say something about lyin' to there for a bit, to tak' a keg or something aboard."

The boys looked at each other, bade Alan good night, and walked away. Robert was the first to speak.

"Hoo far is 't to Stonehaven, Shargar?"

"I dinna richtly ken. Maybe frae twal to fifteen mile."

Robert stopped. Shargar saw that his face was pale as death, and contorted with the effort to control his feelings.

"Shargar," he said, "what *am* I to do? I vowed to Mr. Ericson that, gin he deid, I wad luik efter that bonny lassie a' that I cud. An' noo he's lyin' at the pint o' deith, an' I hae latten her slip throu my fingers wi' clean carelessness. What am I to do? Gin I cud only win to Stonehaven afore the Amphitrite! I cud gang aboard wi' the keg, and gin I cud do naething mair, I wad hae tried to do my best. Gin I do naething, my hert 'll brak wi' the weicht o' my shame."

Shargar burst into a roar of laughter. Robert was on the point of knocking him down, but took him by the throat instead as a milder proceeding, and shook him till he was nearly black in the face.

"Robert! Robert!" gurgled Shargar, "ye're an awfu' Hielan'man. Hearken to me. I beg—g—g yer pardon. What I was thinkin' o' was——"

By this time Robert had relaxed his hold, and Shargar could go on. But he could hardly speak even then for the enjoyment of his own device.

"Gin we could only get rid o' Jock Mitchell——"

"He's wi' a wuman i' the Gallowgate."

"Losh, man!" exclaimed Shargar, and started off at full speed. He was no match for Robert at running, however.

"Whaur the deevil are ye gaein', Shargar?" said Robert, laying hold of his arm. "Ye sanna muv' a fit till ye tell me."

"Come awa', Robert. Losh, man! ye'll be on Black Geordie's back in anither ten meenits, an' me ahin' ye upo' Reid Rorie. An' faith gin we binna at Stanehive afore the Dutchman wha cairries his boddom foremost, it 'll be the faut o' the horse an' no o' the man."

Robert's heart gave a bound of hope.

"But hoo 'ill ye get them, Shargar?"

"Steal them," answered Shargar.

"But we micht be hanged for that."

"Weel, Robert, I'll tak' a' the wyte o' t. Gin it hadna been for you, I was no unlikely to be hangt for ill doin': for your sake I'll be hangt for weel doin', an' welcome. Come awa'. To steal a mairch upo' brither Sandy wi' aucht horse-huves o' 's ain 's something to live for."

Nothing more was said till they reached a retired hostelry between the two towns. Telling Robert not to show himself, Shargar disappeared round the corner of the house.

Robert waited till he grew weary, and then anxious. At length he saw Shargar's face coming through the darkness.

"Robert," he whispered, "gie 's yer bonnet. I'll be wi' ye in ae minute mair."

Robert obeyed, too anxious to question him. In about three minutes Shargar reappeared, leading the ghost of a black horse as it seemed; for Robert could only see the horse's eyes, and his hoofs made scarcely any sound. How he had managed it with a horse of Black Geordie's temper, I do not know; but perhaps the gipsies are acquainted with some secrets in regard to the lower animals that are rarely known to others. At all events some horses will let some persons do anything they like with them. Shargar had drawn his own stockings over the fore feet of Black Geordie, and had tied Robert's cap and his own upon the hind hoofs.

"Lead him awa' quietly up the road till I come to ye," said Shargar, as he took the mufflings off the horse's feet. "An' min' 'at he doesna tak' a nip o' ye. He's ill for bitin'. I'll be efter ye directly. Rorie's saiddlet and bridled. He only wants his carpet-shune."

Robert went on slowly for a few hundred yards, then stopped and waited. Shargar soon joined him, already mounted on Reid Rorie.

"Here's yer bonnet, Robert. It's some foul, I doobt. But I cudna help it. Gang on, man. Up wi' ye. Maybe I wad hae better keepit Geordie mysel'. But ye can ride. Ance ye're on, he canna bite ye."

But Robert needed no encouragement from Shargar. In his present mood he would have mounted a griffin. He was on horseback in a moment. They trotted gently through the streets, and out of the town. Once over the Dee, they gave their horses the rein, and away they went at an increasing pace through the dark drizzle. Before they got half way they were wet to the skin throughout; but little did Robert, or Shargar either, care for that. Scarcely a word passed between them.

"Hoo 'ill ye get the horse (*plural*) in again, Shargar?" asked Robert once.

"Afore I get them back," answered Shargar, "they'll be tired eneuch to gang hame o' themsel's. Gin we had only had the luck to meet Jock!—that wad hae been gran'."

"What for that?"

"I wad hae cawed Reid Rorie ower the heid o' 'm, an' left him lyin', the coorse villain!"

To this Robert returned no answer. Their horses never flagged till they

drew up in the main street of Stonehaven. Robert ran down to the harbour to make inquiry, and left Shargar to put the horses up for an hour or so.

The moon was now up, but the air was so full of vapour that she only succeeded in melting the darkness a little. The sea rolled in front very awful in its dreariness, under just light enough to show a something unlike the land. The rain had now ceased, and the air was clearer. Robert asked a solitary man, with a telescope in his hand, whether he was looking out for the Amphitrite. The man asked him gruffly in return what he knew of her. Possibly the nature of the keg to be put on board had something to do with the nature of his reply. Robert told him he was a friend of the captain, had missed the boat, and would give any one five shillings to put him on board. The man went away and returned with a companion. After some further questioning and bargaining, they agreed to take him. Robert loitered about the pier, full of impatience. Shargar joined him. The men had vanished. Day began to break over the waves. They gleamed with a blue-gray leaden colour. The men came along the harbour towards a stair. Down this stair they went, and into a little skiff. A barrel or something like one lay under a tarpaulin. Robert bade Shargar good-bye, and followed. Shargar went to get the horses out. While the boat lay waiting for the brig, the light grew apace, till Robert fancied he could distinguish the two horses with one rider against the sky on the top of the cliffs, moving northwards. Turning his eyes away to sea, he saw, northwards too, the canvas of the Dutch brig. The men bent to their oars. She drew nearer. Robert sheltered himself a little under the tarpaulin that covered the barrel. When they reached the side of the vessel, where the swell was a little hazardous for the boat, Robert caught the rope the sailors threw, and was on board in a moment, and went aft to the captain. The Dutchman stared. In a few words Robert made him understand his object, promising to pay for his passage, of which the good man would not hear. He told Robert that they had come on board as brother and sister: the baron was too knowing to run his head into the noose of Scotch law.

"I cannot throw him overboard," said the captain; "and what am I to do? I'm afraid it's no use interfering. I'll tell her, if you like, that I'll take her home again as soon as she's ready to go. Ah! poor thing!"

By this time the vessel was under way again. Very soon the wind freshened. The captain said the poor lady had been taken ill almost before they were out of the mouth of the river. But now she was much worse. The captain kept running up and down the companion, and reported that she was very ill. Before another hour had passed, she was crying to be taken home to her papa. Still the wind increased, and the vessel laboured much.

Robert never felt better, and if it had not been for the reason of his being there, he would have thoroughly enjoyed it. He put on some sea-going clothes of the captain's, and set himself at once to take his share in working the brig. In this he was soon proficient enough to be useful. When the sun rose they were in the midst of a tossing wilderness of waves. And with the sunrise, the preceding night having retreated into the region of dreams, Robert began to think that he had been guilty of a great folly. For what could he do? How could he prevent the girl from going with her lover? But at all



events, the poor attempt he was ready to make would verify his willingness in the eyes of Ericson.

The baron came on deck now and then, looking bored. He had not calculated on having to nurse the girl all the way out. He did not like to be bored. Had Mysie been well, he could have amused himself with her sufficiently till they got on shore; for he found her ignorance interesting. I have little doubt that he felt injured and somewhat disgusted at the result of the experiment, as certainly poor Mysie was. On the third day the wind abated a little; but towards night it blew hard once more, and it was not till they were in the smooth waters of the Scheldt that Mysie made her appearance on deck, her beauty greatly gone, looking dreadfully ill, and altogether like a miserable, unhappy child. Lord Rothie did not pay her much attention; indeed it would have been difficult for him to do so, the poor girl took so little interest in what he did offer.

Robert had made no attempt to communicate with her, for there was scarcely a chance of her concealing a letter from the baron. But as soon as they were in smooth water he wrote one, telling her in the simplest language that the baron was a bad man, who had amused himself by making many women fall in love with him, whom he had then left miserable: he knew one himself. Then he looked abroad over the smooth water, and the land smooth as the water on both sides of him. He saw tall poplars,—the spires of the forest, and rows of round-headed dumpy trees, like domes. And he saw that all the buildings that looked like churches were built either with spires like poplars or with low round domes like those other trees, which gave an eastern aspect to the country. The spire of Antwerp cathedral especially had the poplar for its model. The pinnacles which arose from the base of each successive start of the narrowing spire were just the clinging, upright branches of the poplar—a lovely instance of how art uses the suggestion of nature. Little did Robert think while gazing on that spire what a part it was going to bear in his story.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ROBERT FINDS A NEW INSTRUMENT.

At length they reached the quay. Robert had given his letter to Captain Hoornbeck, who, having found an opportunity, gave it to Miss Lindsay, asking her to read it alone as soon as she could. It was the poorest of chances, but Robert could think of no other. She started at receiving it, but yielded to the captain's significant desire, and put it away. She looked anything but happy, for her illness had deprived her of all courage, and probably roused her conscience. Robert followed them, to find where they went, saw them enter the hotel, and turned away helpless—objectless indeed, in the streets of a strange town, without a word of any modern language but his own whereby to communicate with the beings around him; feeling foolish likewise, as having run a wild-goose-chase for no result; and knowing that a world of innocence and beauty was about to be hurled from its little orbit of light into the blackness of an outer chaos, yet unable to speak a word or do a deed that should frustrate the power of the evil one: surely he was a devil

who loved himself so much that he counted it an honour to any girl to have him for her ruin. Her after life was nothing to him, or a trophy of his victory. He never thought that this victory was yielded to one supposed to be very different from him; that he gained it by lying and the garments of light; that if his inward form had appeared in the reality of its essential ugliness, scarcely one of the women whose admiration he sought and gained would not have turned from him with horror and dismay as from the monster of an old tale.

Robert wandered about gazing at the streets until he came on the open space before the cathedral. He was weary, and his head ached. He looked up at the spire which rose aloft into a calm blue sky flecked with a few white clouds. It was near sunset, and the sun was hidden from where he stood; but the upper half of the spire shone glorious in its radiance. From the top his eye sank to the base. In the base was a little door half open. Might not that be the lowly narrow entrance, as through the gate of death into the light above—a door in the shadow leading up to the sun-filled air? He drew near with a kind of tremor, for never yet had he stood before visible grandeur grown out of the human soul like a tree of the Lord's planting—in the majesty of endurance. Where had been but an empty space of air and light and darkness, open to all eyes, had arisen, and had stood for ages, a mighty marvel, awful to the eye, solid as the frame of the earth to the hand, and—he had yet to learn—with “most miraculous organ” of speech. He peeped through the opening of the door: there was the foot of a stair—marvellous as the ladder of Jacob's dream—turning away towards the unknown. He pushed the door and entered. A man appeared from somewhere and barred his advance. Instinctively Robert put his hand in his pocket, drew out some silver, and offered it. The man took one piece—looked at it—turned it over—accepted it, and led the way up the stair. Robert followed and followed and followed.

He came out of stone walls upon a platform from which the spire rose heavenwards. The city lay at his feet. But his conductor led upwards still, and he followed, winding within a spiral network of stone, through which the whole world looked in. Another platform, and yet another spire springing from its basement. And still up they went, till at last they stood on a circle of stone surrounding like a coronet the last apex of the spire which still ascended untrodden towards the heaven of rest. Then Robert turned and looked below. He confessed, though when I knew him he had the steadiest of brains as well as the readiest of hands, that he grasped the stonework next him, and his *knees grew faint* as he cast his eyes beneath. A loneliness like that of the Ancient Mariner enfolded him—

So lonely 'twas that God himself  
Scarce seemed there to be.

There was nothing between him and the roofs of the houses, four hundred feet below, but the spot upon which he stood. The whole city, with its red roofs, varied here and there by a black one, lay there like a toy town, taken out of a great box manufactured in the Black Forest. Constantly reminded of the toys of his babyhood, he stood upon the first work of man that had

glorified him with its greatness. The all but featureless flat spread forty miles on every side, and the roofs of the largest buildings below seemed only large enough for dove-cots.

He turned and descended. With just a network of stone between him and absolute space, or, when he reached the successive bases, looking through two thicknesses of stone-lace down on the city below, which held at least one crime, and the cloud of one wearing rain of misery, he descended towards the earth. His conductor had vanished. His headache, too, was gone, in spite of the six hundred steps he had had to climb. With his mind tossed between its own speechless delight, and the thought of the abyss to which poor Mysie below was drawing near, he was slowly descending, when he saw on his left hand a door. He would look what was within. It was not quite shut—a push opened it. He saw a small chamber lined with wood. In the centre stood something—a chiffonier or some bench-like piece of furniture of the plainest wood. He advanced a step; peeped over the top of it; saw keys, white and black; saw pedals below: it was an organ! Two strides brought him in front of it. A wooden stool, polished and hollowed with centuries of use, stood before it. But where was the bellows? That might be down a hundred steps for anything he knew; for he was half way only to the ground. Mechanically, as if he had been taking his place before the organ in St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, he seated himself on the stool, and struck, as he thought, a dumb chord. Responded, up in the air, far overhead, a mighty booming clang. Startled, almost frightened, even as if Miss St. John had said she loved him, Robert sprung from his stool, and, without knowing why, moved only by the chastity of delight, flung the door to the post. It banged and clicked. Then, almost mad with joy, thinking of nothing but music, excited by the whole course of the last days, by the marvel of the spire, and ten times more by the discovery of this titanic instrument, he seated himself at the keys, and plunged into a tempest of clanging harmony. How many bells responded to the keys he did not know: One hundred hang in that tower, an instrument for a city, nay, for a kingdom. Often had Robert thought in his times of musical excitement that the grandest summit of humanity would be to conduct an orchestra in heaven—to be the centre of a thunder-cloud of harmony, flashing off from every finger the willed lightning tone: now such was the unexpected scale of the instrument—so far aloft in the sunny air rang the responsive tones, that his touch seemed to have the same connection with them (and no more) that the conductor has with his trained band. The music, like a fountain bursting up from the instrument, bore him aloft with it, and all below and around was forgotten or unheeded. From the resounding cone of bells overhead he seemed not to hear tones proceeding, but to see level-winged forms of light speeding off with a message to the nations. It was only his roused phantasy; but every sweet tone is nevertheless a God's messenger; and a right harmony and sequence of them is a little gospel. After some time he found himself following, till that moment unconsciously, the sequence of tunes he well remembered having played on his violin the night he went first with Ericson to see Mysie. The last thing he played was the strange chant of Ericson about the witch lady and the dead man's hand.

Before he had finished that his passion had begun to fold its wings. He grew dimly aware that there was a beating at the door of the solitary chamber in which he sat. He had never thought of the enormity of which he was guilty—presenting the whole city of Antwerp with a glorious phantasia unsought. He did not know that only upon grand, solemn, world-wide occasions, such as a king's birthday or a ball at the Hôtel de Ville, was such music on the card. When he flung the door to, it had closed with a spring-lock, and for the last quarter of an hour, three gens-d'arme, commanded by the sacristan of the tower, had been thundering thereat. As soon as he heard them—consciously, that is—he waited only to finish the last notes of the wild Orcadian chant, and then opened the door. He was straightway seized by the collar, dragged down the stair into the street, and through a crowd of wondering faces—poor unconscious dreamer in the church spire! it will not do to utter what you think on the house-top, and you had been dreaming very loud indeed in the church—away to the bureau of the police.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## DEATH.

I know that my reader is not in the least anxious about Robert. I need not, therefore, describe to him all the proceedings of the Belgian police; how they interrogated him even as to the signature of a letter of Mary St. John which they found in an inner pocket of his waistcoat, looked doubtful over a copy of Horace that lay in his coat, and put what was evidently a momentous question about some algebraical calculation on the fly-leaf of it. Fortunately or unfortunately—I do not know which—Robert did not understand a word they said to him. He was locked up, and left there to fret for nearly a week; though what he could have done had he been at liberty, he knew as little as I know. At last, long after it was useless to make any inquiry about Miss Lindsay, he was set at liberty. He could just pay for a steerage passage to London, whence he wrote to Dr. Anderson for a supply, and was in Aberdeen a few days after.

This was Robert's first cosmopolitan experience. He confided the whole affair to the doctor, who approved of all, telling him it was of no use, but that he had done his best, and advised him to go home at once, for he had had letters inquiring after him, which he had been able to answer with Shargar's help. He said that Ericson was growing steadily worse—in fact, that he feared he might not see him alive.

If this account gave Robert a keen pang of distress, the pain was yet not without some alleviation: he need not tell him about Mysie, but might leave him to find it out, when, free of a dying body, he would be better able to hear it. That very night he set out on foot for Rothieden. There was no coach from Aberdeen till eight the following morning, and before that he would be there.

It was a dreary journey without Ericson. Every turn of the road reminded him of him. And Ericson too was going a lonely way—a way that we must all go—unknown to him and to us all.

Did two ever go together upon that way? Might not two die together and

not lose hold of each other all the time, even when the sense of the clasping hands was gone, and the soul had withdrawn itself from them? Happy they who prefer the will of God to their own even in this, and would, as the best friend, have Him near who *can* be near—Him who made the fourth in the fiery furnace! Fable or fact, reader, I do not care. The One I mean *it*, and in him I hope.

Very weary was Robert when he went into his grandmother's house.

"Is Mr. Ericson——?" was all he could say, as Betty came out of the kitchen at the sound of his entrance.

"Na; he's nae deid," she answered. "He'll maybe live a day or twa, they say."

"Thank God!" said Robert, and went to his grandmother.

"Eh, laddie!" said she, after the first greetings were over, "ane's ta'en an' anither's left! but what for's mair nor I can faddom. There's that fine young man, Maister Ericson, at deith's door; an' here am I, an' auld runklet wife, left to cry upo' deith, an' he winna hear me."

"Cry upo' God, grannie, an' no upo' deith," said Robert, taking up the word as his grandmother might have done. He had given up the unfair habit before I knew him, and always spoke to one's meaning, not one's words. But then he had a wonderful gift of knowing what one did mean.

As soon as he had had something to eat he went up to The Boar's Head. He walked in, met no one, and went straight to Ericson's room. It had been altered since he saw it: a great screen stood behind the door. As he entered he heard a painful cough, sounding so like death that he could not control his feelings sufficiently to allow himself to go in. Then he heard a voice—that of Ericson; but oh, how changed! He had no idea that he ought not to listen.

"Mary," the voice said, "do not look like that. I am not suffering. It is only my body. Your strong arm round me makes me so glad that I can face death without fear. Let me lay my head on you. Now."

"But, Eric," said Miss St. John's voice, "there is one that loves you better than I do."

"If there is," returned Ericson, feebly, "he has sent his angel to deliver me."

"But you do believe in him, Eric?"

And the voice expressed anxiety as well as love.

"I am going to see. There is no other way. When I find him, I shall believe in him. I shall love him with all my heart, I know. I love the thought of him now."

"But that's not himself, my—darling!" she said.

"No. But I cannot love himself till I find him. Perhaps there is no Jesus."

"Oh, don't say that. I can't bear to hear you talk so."

"But, dear heart, if you're so sure of him, you can't love him as you believe you do, if you think he would turn me away because I don't do what I can't do, when I would if I could with all my heart. Would you now send me to—you know what they say—even if I were to forget you altogether?"



"No, no, no. Don't talk like that, Eric dear. There may be reasons, you know."

"I know what they say. But I expect Him, if there is a Him, to be better even than you, my beautiful, and I don't know a fault in you, but that you believe in a God you can't trust. Now if I believed in a God, wouldn't I trust him just? And I do hope in him. We'll see, my darling, when we meet once more. You'll see I'm right."

Robert stood like one turned into marble. Deep called unto deep in his soul. And the waves and the billows went over him.

Mary St. John answered not a word. I think she must have been conscience-stricken. Surely the Son of Man saw *nearly* as much faith in Ericson as in her. Only she clung to the word as a bond that the Lord had given her: she would rather have his bond.

Ericson had another fit of coughing. Robert heard the little rustling of ministration. But in a moment he heard the dying man again take up the word. It appeared that he was almost as anxious about Mary's faith as she was about his.

"There's Robert," he said: "I do believe that boy would die for me, and I never did anything to deserve it. Now Jesus Christ must be as good as Robert at least. I think he must be a great deal better, if he's Jesus Christ at all. Now Robert might be hurt if I didn't believe in *him*. But I've never seen Jesus Christ. It's all in an old book, over which the people that say they believe in it the most, fight like dogs and cats. I beg your pardon, my Mary; but they do, though the words are ugly."

"Ah! but if you had tried it as I've tried it, you would know better, Eric."

"I think I should, dear. But it's too late now. I must just go and see. There's no other way left."

And then came the terrible cough again. As soon as the fit was over, Robert went from behind the screen, with a grand despair in his heart.

Ericson lay upon a couch. The dying head was laid on Mary St. John's bosom. Neither saw him at first.

"Perhaps," said Ericson, panting with death, "a kiss in heaven may be as good as being married on earth—eh, Mary?"

But she saw Robert and did not answer. Then Eric saw him. Neither moved. Eric smiled; but Mary grew very pale.

Robert came forward, stooped and kissed Ericson's forehead, kneeled and kissed Mary's hand, rose and went out.

And from that moment they were both dead to him. Dead, I say—not lost nor estranged, but dead—that is, awful and holy. He wept for Eric. He did not weep for Mary yet. But he found a time for that too. Ericson died two days after. Robert was then once more on the sea. And here endeth Robert's youth.

## A MORNING'S MOONING IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

"MOON, v.n.," is scarcely a "dictionary word" as yet, but it has long held brevet rank in the English language, and, although there is a suggestion of lunacy in its etymology, it describes, I am not ashamed to say, a *far niente* mode of passing time in which I find delight. Limitations, as Emerson has said, destroy interest. I love to set out upon a walk which has the charm of *quasi* eternity about it, because I don't know why I began it, or where it will end—to drift like a chip on the cross tides of London life, entering any corner into which they eddy—to buzz about and settle, like a bluebottle, when I find anything to interest me, and then, when the interest is exhausted, to give myself to the wind again with the fly's aimlessness.

So wandering, on one of the dark mornings that succeeded the burst of antedated summer which, in the early part of May, made black dry sticks, "barren as lances," in suburban garden-plots and smoke-dimmed squares, clothe themselves in full foliage and fragrant blossom almost as swiftly as magician's rods, and brought out a swarm of Oriental hatcover-sellers to jostle with the white-bundled newsboys at City corners, around which a few days afterwards the satirical east wind howled again like a hungry wolf, and cut like a Titan's razor—on such a morning, coldly dark and dreary, I drifted into St. James's Park.

Its wilted lilac-clusters, the dimmed golden chains of its laburnums, showering down their faded broken links, had the doleful look of remorseful fast youths, bitterly but vainly regretting that they had exhausted life before life had fairly begun. The peeping blossoms of its red hawthorn seemed to have adopted a "tentative process," and, by no means cheered by their reception, to envy the retractility of the occupants of the neighbouring Downing Street. The men at work on the sewer in front of the new Government offices plied their spades and turned their windlasses, as blue-nosed as gold-diggers in British Columbia. The seats and music-stands in the enclosure in which the evening band plays were a dismal spectacle—suggestive only of airs played out of tune by hands too numb to finger their frigid instruments, and of amply merited frozen toes, with subsequent colds in the head and agues, on the part of any audience absurd enough to sit down to listen to *al fresco* music in such weather. Two perambulators only were circling round the Ornamental Water; the blue-nosed babies scowled at one another as they passed, and the red-wristed propellers gave each other a glance of sulky sympathy, as fellow martyrs to mistresses' insanely insolent oppression. A small percentage of the usual sad and seedy occupants of the Park benches sat upon them as usual in sombre silence—the only expression in their lack-lustre, hopeless eyes intimating an intention, apparently, of going on sitting there—poor shabby Theseuses—for ever; upon one, a pair of idiotic lovers billed and cooed with chattering teeth; but otherwise they were untenanted, the sparse representatives of the general public foolish enough to frequent the Park on such a day having, for the most part, nevertheless, sense enough left to keep themselves warm by taking active exercise. The woman in charge

of the wire and wooden chairs, artfully arranged to lure the inexperienced into a belief that they are provided by a paternal government for the gratuitous accommodation of its lieges, now lurked in corners, and now made zig-zag dashes like a hungry spider, in faint hope that some weary fly might fall, or had fallen, into her web. Angrily she shook the courier's bag dangling at her side, which returned no grateful clink of clashing coppers. A smoking bricklayer's labourer, a solemn Guardsman, a tailor on strike, and three small children, hung over the Suspension Bridge, stolidly watching a wherry eccentrically pulled by two little bare and bullet-headed Bluecoat boys, with alternate strokes, two hobbydehoys in two other boats doggedly fouling each other without the interchange of a syllable, and a Cockney canoeman somewhat splashingly playing his paddle and poetically fancying himself—as indeed, so far as climate was concerned, he might have done without any great stretch of imagination—a Red Indian afloat upon a Canadian lake. The other craft, which on bright days skim the dimpled pond like dragon-flies, were all clustered at the hiring-places, chafing their sides as if to keep themselves warm, and giving one another spiteful pokes with their sharp converged noses. The black swans sulked as if they wished themselves back in Australia. The other waterfowl tucked up their toes, and held a “meeting of the unemployed” under the lee of the boom that stretches across the pond. A sour-looking old gentleman in muffetees and a comforter was the only one upon the banks who made a show of crumbs, and he was a deceiver. He beguiled the ducks ashore by proffers of biscuit, and then threw it over their heads to the sparrows, who carried it off to the trees in triumph, whilst the quacking waddlers toiled after them in vain. A clammy grey mist hung over the water, the flower-beds, and the lawns; clumps of trees, only a few yards off, dipped their branches in an upper lake of vapour which covered half their stems. St. James's Park on such a morning may seem a queer place for meditative rambles, but that very mist kept me mooning there. Of those who dwell in the dreary gentility of Pimlico, how many remember that the smoke-sodden stucco of their prim streets and squares towers above earth carted thither from the bottom of St. Katharine's Docks—that thronged thousands of vulgar East Enders have lived on that earth before them, when the Docks were as yet undug? Of those who feed the ducks in St. James's Park, how many reflect that waterfowl have an aboriginal right to be there, since the Park was once a dismal swamp, a fen where wild-geese fed; that where now babies cry in perambulators the lonely bittern boomed; that verdant lawn, variegated parterre, winding path, and shady copse have taken the place of black steaming mud and rusty bulrushes?—the mist that so often makes “second distances” in the Park, still tells of the old morass. On first learning this, one feels somewhat as that poor West Port woman, of whom the Edinburgh papers recently told us, must have felt when her husband, quietly reading by the fireside, suddenly disappeared with the hearthstone, and shrieked out that he was drowning—in the undreamt of, dim, echoing, miasmal, Stygian pool below. In the Park's swamp days, to intensify its dismalness, a lazar-house was planted on its borders. Where gloomy St. James's Palace stands, a gloomier St. James's Hospital stood—for female

lepers—there, at the end of Pall Mall, quite cut off from the world. I have read somewhere of lonely lepers planted wailing along a river's bank, to receive in floating bowls the alms wrung from the loathing pity of the unstricken who passed up and down the stream; but their life could scarcely have been more dreary than that of the former tenants of St. James's, looking out with bleary eyes on the leaden marsh-waters, pitted with the sullen splashes of persistent rain, listening at night to the croaking of the bull-frogs and the melancholy piping of the plover. The dolefulness of the Spital has descended to the palace; it looks like a cross between a prison and a work-house, and the chapel outside reminds one of a suburban conventicle. As I wandered about the old place, peeping into the dull, quiet little courts, in which the very air seemed to be only out for jail exercise between the low battlemented walls, I saw a white-aproned maiden peering in moody listlessness through one of the dusky windows. *She* apparently thought the palace a prison, and longed for a less splendid servitude, even for a maid-of-all-work's place, in which she could gossip on washing-days, with her sister slaveys over the back-yard walls, for her pretty face was melancholy as Mariana's in the Moated Grange. It brightened a little as the echoing tramp of military feet drew near. A portly sergeant passed at the head of his lessening file of redcoats, relieving guard. The scarlet, lighting up the grey pavement and the sepia walls, gave a flush of royalty to the dreary old pile; and I remembered that the very gate-house which now blocks the bottom of St. James's Street, where the old gentlemen in the club bow windows were chatting about compound householders and making quizzical remarks on passing *chignons*, had cast its shadow on the broad shoulders of bluff King Hal, as he rode into his new palace, laughing in jolly pride, and perhaps still leering with as near an approach to love as his nature allowed him, upon beautiful Anne Boleyn on her ambling palfrey beside him. It is as hard now to fancy those old bricks brightly red, that old mortar freshly drawn in lines of creamy whiteness, as to believe a toothless grandame when she mumbles her old stories of the days in which she was a toast. An inappropriate simile, perhaps, since the old barrack cannot have lost any of the beauty that it ever had. At any time it must have been a grim scene for love-passages. The memory of them now rattles in the mouldy shell, a mere shrivelled antiquarian nut which the warmest imagination surely cannot force to germinate. At any rate, my fancy refuses to see the sweet face which we saw last year at South Kensington, set so piquantly beneath the fair smooth tresses on the "very little neck," framed in any of the lowering casements of St. James's. Its quiet is not the dreamy hush in which lovers hide in delicious oblivion of any world beyond that of which two pairs of enamoured eyes are the cloudless summer skies, but more like the oppressive silence that broods in a house in which a corpse lies awaiting burial. The funereal memories of St. James's are far more readily realisable. It seems quite natural that Prince Henry should have died there, and that his brother should have spent his last days there, before he crossed the Park to lose his head. What a strange contrast there is between that journey and the one the queen takes over much of the same ground, when she drives along

of the wire and wooden chairs, artfully arranged to lure the inexperienced into a belief that they are provided by a paternal government for the gratuitous accommodation of its lieges, now lurked in corners, and now made zig-zag dashes like a hungry spider, in faint hope that some weary fly might fall, or had fallen, into her web. Angrily she shook the courier's bag dangling at her side, which returned no grateful clink of clashing coppers. A smoking bricklayer's labourer, a solemn Guardsman, a tailor on strike, and three small children, hung over the Suspension Bridge, stolidly watching a wherry eccentrically pulled by two little bare and bullet-headed Bluecoat boys, with alternate strokes, two hobbydehoys in two other boats doggedly fouling each other without the interchange of a syllable, and a Cockney canoeman somewhat splashingly playing his paddle and poetically fancying himself—as indeed, so far as climate was concerned, he might have done without any great stretch of imagination—a Red Indian afloat upon a Canadian lake. The other craft, which on bright days skim the dimpled pond like dragon-flies, were all clustered at the hiring-places, chafing their sides as if to keep themselves warm, and giving one another spiteful pokes with their sharp converged noses. The black swans sulked as if they wished themselves back in Australia. The other waterfowl tucked up their toes, and held a “meeting of the unemployed” under the lee of the boom that stretches across the pond. A sour-looking old gentleman in muffetees and a comforter was the only one upon the banks who made a show of crumbs, and he was a deceiver. He beguiled the ducks ashore by proffers of biscuit, and then threw it over their heads to the sparrows, who carried it off to the trees in triumph, whilst the quacking waddlers toiled after them in vain. A clammy grey mist hung over the water, the flower-beds, and the lawns; clumps of trees, only a few yards off, dipped their branches in an upper lake of vapour which covered half their stems. St. James's Park on such a morning may seem a queer place for meditative rambles, but that very mist kept me mooning there. Of those who dwell in the dreary gentility of Pimlico, how many remember that the smoke-sodden stucco of their prim streets and squares towers above earth carted thither from the bottom of St. Katharine's Docks—that thronged thousands of vulgar East Enders have lived on that earth before them, when the Docks were as yet undug? Of those who feed the ducks in St. James's Park, how many reflect that waterfowl have an aboriginal right to be there, since the Park was once a dismal swamp, a fen where wild-geese fed; that where now babies cry in perambulators the lonely bittern boomed; that verdant lawn, variegated parterre, winding path, and shady copse have taken the place of black steaming mud and rusty bulrushes?—the mist that so often makes “second distances” in the Park, still tells of the old morass. On first learning this, one feels somewhat as that poor West Port woman, of whom the Edinburgh papers recently told us, must have felt when her husband, quietly reading by the fireside, suddenly disappeared with the hearthstone, and shrieked out that he was drowning—in the undreamt of, dim, echoing, miasmal, Stygian pool below. In the Park's swamp days, to intensify its dismalness, a lazar-house was planted on its borders. Where gloomy St. James's Palace stands, a gloomier St. James's Hospital stood—for female



lepers—there, at the end of Pall Mall, quite cut off from the world. I have read somewhere of lonely lepers planted wailing along a river's bank, to receive in floating bowls the alms wrung from the loathing pity of the unstricken who passed up and down the stream; but their life could scarcely have been more dreary than that of the former tenants of St. James's, looking out with blear eyes on the leaden marsh-waters, pitted with the sullen splashes of persistent rain, listening at night to the croaking of the bull-frogs and the melancholy piping of the plover. The dolefulness of the Spital has descended to the palace; it looks like a cross between a prison and a work-house, and the chapel outside reminds one of a suburban conventicle. As I wandered about the old place, peeping into the dull, quiet little courts, in which the very air seemed to be only out for jail exercise between the low battlemented walls, I saw a white-aproned maiden peering in moody listlessness through one of the dusky windows. *She* apparently thought the palace a prison, and longed for a less splendid servitude, even for a maid-of-all-work's place, in which she could gossip on washing-days, with her sister slaveys over the back-yard walls, for her pretty face was melancholy as Mariana's in the Moated Grange. It brightened a little as the echoing tramp of military feet drew near. A portly sergeant passed at the head of his lessening file of redcoats, relieving guard. The scarlet, lighting up the grey pavement and the sepia walls, gave a flush of royalty to the dreary old pile; and I remembered that the very gate-house which now blocks the bottom of St. James's Street, where the old gentlemen in the club bow windows were chatting about compound householders and making quizzical remarks on passing *chignons*, had cast its shadow on the broad shoulders of bluff King Hal, as he rode into his new palace, laughing in jolly pride, and perhaps still leering with as near an approach to love as his nature allowed him, upon beautiful Anne Boleyn on her ambling palfrey beside him. It is as hard now to fancy those old bricks brightly red, that old mortar freshly drawn in lines of creamy whiteness, as to believe a toothless grandame when she mumbles her old stories of the days in which she was a toast. An inappropriate simile, perhaps, since the old barrack cannot have lost any of the beauty that it ever had. At any time it must have been a grim scene for love-passages. The memory of them now rattles in the mouldy shell, a mere shrivelled antiquarian nut which the warmest imagination surely cannot force to germinate. At any rate, my fancy refuses to see the sweet face which we saw last year at South Kensington, set so piquantly beneath the fair smooth tresses on the "very little neck," framed in any of the lowering casements of St. James's. Its quiet is not the dreamy hush in which lovers hide in delicious oblivion of any world beyond that of which two pairs of enamoured eyes are the cloudless summer skies, but more like the oppressive silence that broods in a house in which a corpse lies awaiting burial. The funereal memories of St. James's are far more readily realisable. It seems quite natural that Prince Henry should have died there, and that his brother should have spent his last days there, before he crossed the Park to lose his head. What a strange contrast there is between that journey and the one the queen takes over much of the same ground, when she drives along

the Mall, between two running fires of cheers, to open Parliament. There is an unlucky look about St. James's, as if "something ailed the place." Is it caused by architecture or association? There James II. was sitting for the picture he had promised to Mr. Pepys—and with a touch of chivalrous kindness irradiating his ingrained obstinacy, there he went on sitting for it, to fulfil his promise—when he learnt that his son-in-law had landed to oust him from his throne. There his luckless son was born, and cruel Fortune, not content with the dreary destiny to which she had doomed him, must add insult to injury, strive to rob his life of the little dignity still left it, by giving currency to the legend of the warming pan. Pleasant memories for a moment mellow the grimy old bricks, when you call to mind that the Queen Mary whom Macaulay (lured, perchance, into a little idealisation by his hero-worship for her hawk-nosed lord) has made a Madonna amongst female monarchs, was born and married within those sombre precincts, but the gleam fades when you think of her heavy sister and her heavier husband boosing together within them, like a coal-heaver and his wife. Neither are the dully improper first two Georges—save for the amber of the wit in which their vulgar naughtinesses have been preserved—ennobling associations of St. James's.

Thence I strolled westwards, mooning still, to the palace which first became one in the days of the dully proper George the Third. In spite of modern additions, Buckingham Palace is not a palatial-looking pile. Omnibuses should be rolling through the gateways, there should be a cab-stand on the paved space in front, the façade is as that of a second-rate terminus hotel. It and its gardens, however, cover the site of the old Mulberry Gardens, wherein the free-and-easy ladies of the Second Charles's time leered at their miscellaneous lovers through masks smeared with syllabub; and of old Buckingham House, in which the duke and duchess of that ilk strutted about like a couple of gobbling turkeys. Sheffield, puffed up with pride at his poetaster's fame, and sitting down in state to write a pompous monograph on the mansion in which he had provided sumptuous birth-chambers for the long line of legitimate inheritors of his blue blood, which began and ended with one; and his duchess even prouder at the thought that she was, *perhaps*, the natural daughter of James the Second. The less pride has to grasp, the tighter, like other poor creatures, it seems to clutch. But the prim memory of Queen Charlotte is the one most present to a mooner in front of Buckingham Palace. Buckingham House was her jointure-house when the "young Queen." How odd the adjective sounds applied to her! We derive our impression of her from the remembrances of our grandmothers and great-aunts, and she is stereotyped in our imagination as a middle-aged matron. Middle-class matrons of the present day still speak of her with admiration, and she seems to have been their representative woman; a type, glorified only by position, of their narrow virtues and narrow vices, humdrum respectability raised to the dignity of royal majesty, a crowned Mrs. Grundy. At Buckingham House were born the naughty sons whose course in life she watched as a hen watches her brood of ducklings—*her* fast dukelings—when they take the water.\*

\* Since this was written the crescent and the star have waved above Buckingham Palace, and ingenious publicists, compelled to write leading articles on all "novelties

Everywhere in London, as everywhere in other places, the past and present, of course, meet; but in most parts of London the present has quite overlapped the past—the old writing is indiscernible beneath the latest inscription on the palimpsest. Lamp-posts have taken the place of elms; red terraces are ruled as straight as ciphering-book lines, and thatched rows of yellow bricks are drying, in meadows in which cowslips once nodded, and our ancestors went a-maying. Railway arches and eight-foot walls, plastered with gaudy placards, and chalked with, "Who's Griffiths?"—hoardings, enclosing chaoses of ash-heaps, oyster-shells, old shoes, broken tobacco-pipes, and stagnant rainpools, haunted by old-faced infants, as filthy as the soil they make a dreary pretence of turning into a playground, and ragged, greasy, cowering "casuals," waiting for the workhouse or the refuge to open; and imposing structures of stucco, Portland stone, Kentish rag, variegated brick, china-like tile, and polished granite pillars, have deprived old, in-and-out, beetle-browed, but often classic, localities both of their whilom local habitations and their names. The course of traffic has been diverted into fresh channels, as a canal is dug to cut off the bends of a meandering river, and quaintly-named old alleys, lanes, courts, yards, and taverns are lost for ever beneath a purse-proud, parvenu neology of buildings, chambers, and Tower of Babel hotels, to the top of which their customers, with no more recognised personal identity than census numerals, are hoisted up like sacks of corn. But in St. James's Park a living past still meets the present. Above its green tufts, and plumes, and clumps of foliage, so pleasant a relief to the eye just wearied by the drab monotony of most of the dust-furred buildings in Whitehall, you can see both the towers of the Abbey, and the towers of the Palace of Westminster; and, old as they are, the former promise to outlast the latter. There is still water, there are still waterfowl, where Count Grammont had his Barataria government of Duck Island. Where the Merry Monarch, with a pack of pursy, pensile-eared little spaniels yapping at his light heels, used to stride along, looking in at his aviaries, sparrows, as sombrely, seedily clad, and as impertinently cheerful as undertakers' men, stray jail-birds from the Westminster slums, and red-breasts six feet high conversing with their female admirers, Pyramus and Thisbe fashion, through the numerous holes which riddle the vainly erected boarding-up of their barrack rails, are now the sole representatives of ornithology—but Birdcage Walk is still a walk so called. (By-the-bye, I may mention, in passing, a Cockney interpretation I once heard put upon the W. R. with which the palisading of the Guards' Barracks is embossed. "Vot's that mean, Spider?" asked a tattered, dirt-begrimed small boy of a brother scarecrow, of supposed superior philological attainments. Whatever might be Spider's general skill in this line, imperfect historical knowledge obscured his gifts in the present instance. Apparently he had never heard of the Sailor Monarch; at any rate, he answered, with brisk contempt, "Vy, vot

of the season," have found pregnant meaning in that "unprecedented historical event." It may be, however, that we owe the Sultan's visit to the not very thrilling fact that, having got as far as Paris, he thought, like sundry other Exhibition visitors, that he might as well come on to London.

helse can it mean, but the Keveen's name—Chris'n name an' surname, stoopid—Wictorier Bicks!") Not the Fourth William, but the Second Charles, is the haunting spirit of St. James's Park. As I walked along the broad Mall, a bleak wind whistling round the warty trunks, and giving an agreeable fit to the young leaves, of its otiosely shading trees, what I actually saw was—a few carriages, with their occupants pulling striped fur rugs almost up to their noses; a few cabs, whose fares scowled enviously at the passing furs, and whose drivers and drawers vied in hanging their sulky heads like the bulrushes that once drooped above the ground they traversed; a red, rumbling mail-cart, whose driver's ungloved fingers were as blue as his coat; two or three belted and mounted grooms, spitefully jerking the bridles of their led horses; a plump mamma, with a blur of crossness, cross at being cross, dimming the radiance of her obese benevolence, because her little boy, like a very small steam-tug towing a vast East Indiaman, would persist in pulling her through all the puddles; a dainty little daily governess, picking her way, cat-like, through the mire, and sorely puzzled how, with only two hands, to hold up her dress, and to hold also an umbrella, a bag, three books, and a roll of music encased in black Japan leather, dim, and chapped, and frayed and white about the edges; an old man and an old woman, sitting back to back on a bench, like a figure of Janus, and carrying on a mumbling quarrel over their shivering shoulders; four refreshment sellers, shaking like jelly beside their stalls, set out with lemonade and ginger-beer that looked like bottled toothache; four melancholy cows, with loin cloths on, uneasily lifting their cold feet, and glancing and lowering reproachfully at their owners, as if they said, "What is the good of keeping us tied here on such a day as this? Is this the kind of weather for sham rural milk-drinking?" and a few miscellaneous items of humanity, with no salient characteristics save lack of caloric and superfluity of consequent cantankerousness, hurrying to and from the narrow Spring Gardens' gateway. It was not a lively panorama, and I was glad to warm the landscape up by peopling it with old-world figures—to recall the naughty merry Mall and Spring Gardens of our Third Stuart's time. I saw the royal ball-player in his royal shirt-sleeves at his favourite game, and chatting with pretty, witty, highly improper, but still most likable because pretty, witty, and warm-hearted Nell, over her garden-wall, where there is still a garden-wall that has the old foundation; and may, perhaps, have some of the old upper bricks—to the huge scandal of Mr. Evelyn; and well might that highly, somewhat priggish, proper gentleman be scandalized; more especially if, as is not unlikely, Mistress Nell was attired as Mr. Pepys beheld her, when looking out from her Drury Lane lodgings, on an old-fashioned May-day morning, at the merry-making, garlanded milk-maids, clinking their pail-handles as they danced around their fiddler—to wit, in her smock and boddice. I saw sly, naughty Mr. Pepys junketing with Mistress Knipp and the other ladies whom he was so fond of treating at Spring Gardens and elsewhere, when Mistress Pepys, "poor wretch," was not of the party, but simmering in naturally fretful jealousy in the gloomy old house in Seething Lane. I saw the whole bevy of court beauties at whom Mr. Pepys used to look with so queer a mixture of feelings, vexed

that his master should waste his time and the nation's money on such rapacious triflers, compunctiously conscious that he himself, as a married man religiously brought up, ought not to be so delighted at gazing on the lovely sinners; and yet more than half envying the king he had just condemned his power of plucking such forbidden fruit. The prickings of Mr. Pepys' conscience, and the *naïf* expedients by which he quieted it, are some of the most piquant records in his Diary. I saw Killigrew coming through the Park in his sedan, and shivering with fear as two swords stabbed through its sides, broad-bladed hints that made him curb his galloping tongue thenceforth when the conversation turned on Lady Shrewsbury, the laxest moraled (barring perhaps that voluptuous vixen Barbara Villiers) even of the loose lot of ladies that wore their ethics very much as, according to Lely, they wore their stays, the model wife who held her thousand and first lover's horse whilst he gave her husband his death-wound. But what is the good of specifying, when every pebble in the Mall, although you may have just seen the crunching horse-roller crushing its fresh-laid metal, appears inscribed with Carolinian memories?

It has Augustan memories also (Queen Anne was a queer Augusta). Heavy and flushed, like the face of a green-hooded Queen Anne dowager, Marlborough House peers through its foliage over the dusky wall, intrinsically much as it looked when the Duchess of Fire and Brimstone tenanted it; but it has a mistress now of whom it is pleasant to think, a beautiful young mother with her babes about her, who has somehow given to the heavy old pile the cosy look of a bird's-nest. May she soon brighten it again with the dancing sunlight of her health, instead of the moonbeam calm of her patience! Under the Mall trees—the very trees that are chequering the pallid cheeks of young Cockneys this summer—Swift and Addison have walked, and Steele and Prior; Dick in uniform, and Dick with wig awry and hot, red face, thinking remorsefully of the sweet wife at home in the cottage on Haverstock Hill, just razed by the ruthless pick and shovel of improvement. Later come Johnson and Goldsmith, Fielding and Richardson, to stroll beneath the trees. Under them, Richardson had a perfectly proper assignation with a fine lady who was curious to know what manner of man he was. How the author of “Joseph Andrews” would have guffawed if he could have seen the moral meeting, and how vulgarer than ever the author of “Pamela” would have thought him!

They are not moral memories which the name of Carlton evokes. Mr. Turveydrop is the only one who can mourn that Carlton House is as much a thing of the past as its padded plumcake-and-cream-devouring owner. The Duke of York was a good deal more of a man than his crowned brother; but that is not saying much, and what did he ever do to deserve a column? Nelson, on his, seems to sneer at English hero-worship, with a “Thank you for nothing,” as he looks down on the neighbouring pillar. As I passed its broad sweep of steps, flabby-cheeked London infants were squatting and hopping upon them, as usual, like a swarm of Egyptian frogs; the column's curator, through lack of other occupation, watching them with the languid curiosity that a shoal of fishkins, playing about the base of a



lighthouse might excite in its keeper. There was a certain amount of superciliousness in his aspect. He evidently regarded himself as a far-away cousin of the great world; elevated by that distant relationship far above common nature with that spawn of small plebeians. Most comical are the "hard and fast" lines of demarcation which self-constituted "caste" draws in Britain, with invincible faith in the axiomatic nature of their complacent exclusiveness. There is, I fancy, very little genuine democratic feeling amongst Englishmen. Our levellers, as a rule, only wish to level down to their own level. A twopenny-halfpenny tradesman, who may be quite Jacobinical in private towards the "upper classes," to whom in public he slavishly doffs his hat and crooks his back, talks at all times with the superciliousness of a feudal aristocrat, and with far less kindness, of the classes he chooses to consider beneath him. It is rich to listen to the contempt with which the middle and lower middle classes speak of the "common people," and to note the stiffly Tory lines of social exclusion which are drawn between trade and trade by the *soi-disant* "more genteel" practitioners. Baker looks down on butcher, and both consider a "common man" as a creature with which they have no community—not even, *au fond*, in humanity. Can a "casual" who spends his Sunday in a workhouse be really made of the same clay as a respectable tradesman who can take his wife and children out for a Sunday-morning ride in a "shay" hired from the livery-stables, and driven by a jarvie in tarnished blue and pewter? Some demagogues of recognised "social status" may seem to be exceptions to my rule—a few, no doubt, are so—but most of the some, I am cynical enough to think, believe that their "push" and "gift of the gab," under any change of circumstances, would secure for themselves the superior prestige which they denounce as senseless prescription, shameless robbery, when possessed by others. This middle-class Toryism is especially rampant amongst middle-class old women of straitened means. I have heard one such resenting the presence of Cockney holiday-makers in a second-class railway carriage, when she chanced to be travelling on a Monday, as if they had done her an insolent wrong in presuming to take tickets for the same conveyance as herself; and another, who had been glad to eke out her miserable patrimonial pittance by shirt-making on the sly, wondering what the world of "respectability" was coming to, when "mere artisans"—nabobs compared with the poor stuck-up little needlewoman, ashamed of her work—were audacious enough to have opinions, and demand votes, "just as if they were people of property!"

Falling mingled more briskly with floating rain, when I turned down on the bare Parade. To one of the dusky old brick houses that look out on it clung a long clammy bed-tick awning, like a hugely magnified caterpillar crawling through the green garden into shelter. The pepper-and-salt Horse Guards wore their sulkiest look beneath the drizzle that had set in for the day. The long white and black piece of Egyptian ordnance loomed through the mist, above its *chevaux-de-frise*, like a stranded salt-candied spar. The open-mouthed dragon that bears the Corunna mortar between its wings looked more savagely weary than ever of its rusty, open-mouthed burden that long since ceased to belch its hellish fire. The Foot Guards stood in their sentry-

boxes motionless as statues and sullen as cloistered saints. The long-legged Blues stalked backwards and forwards under cover like red-crested swamp-birds abnormally afraid of rain. A mounted orderly in blue and gingerbread janglingly jolted across the open space, silently cursing the puddles that splashed his leather leggings. An old bandsman with dimmed gilt facings, and streaks of faded red beneath his armpits, stolidly plodded through the shower—"years," and the consciousness that his uniform was past spoiling, having brought to him the "philosophic mind." Smart recruiting sergeants clustered in the dark Horse Guards' archways, enjoying, like Elia's Egyptian hermits, one another's want of conversation, and scowling at the rain which had diminished their chances and spotted their ribbons. The statuesque-mounted sentries no longer gazed in godlike calm on the tides of anxious life flowing along Whitehall: the rain began to patter smartly on the closed doors of their vacated niches. Mooning was growing too moist to be comfortable; so, just calling to mind that on that bare parade the poor sequestered stag, that from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt, had once often languished in deep sylvan shade, heaving forth groans that stretched his leathern coat almost to bursting, and that instead of dull windows, whose last cleaning is a memory as dusky as themselves, the bright eyes of Queens of Beauty whilom looked down upon the "Tilt Yard," proudly watching the triumphant resurgences of their embroidered favours in the tourney, I made a jump across three centuries, and hailed a passing omnibus.

RICHARD ROWE.

### A PARIS DIOGENES.

OUR old friend Diogenes is generally taken as the type of cynical contempt for men; but it is better, without regard to the significance of his philosophy, to view Diogenes as the type of that defiant individuality which is provoked, and in some measure justified, by human folly, and which is not incompatible with the warmest affection, as indeed misanthropy is seldom anything more than the shaggy coat of the richest and tenderest sympathy. It would not be a paradox to maintain that increasing misanthropy often means increasing philanthropy—a philanthropy the more exuberant the more it is erratic. Neither, perhaps, would it be paradoxical to declare that the eccentricity in which the misanthropist indulges is the result of an original impulse, and not of circumstances, even if the belief in the empire of circumstances were not a degrading fatalism. In the misanthropist, as depicted by Lucian, or Shakspeare, or Molière, or as exhibited in Rousseau, Byron, and the like, there may be morbid pride, wounded self-love, ghastly disenchantment, resentment for ingratitude and oppression. But deeper and stronger than everything else is the yearning for an idyllic, an ideal, an impossible world. Hence the love of solitude, not for the sake of the solitude, rather that imaginary may be the better contrasted with real existence. Even in the tub of a Diogenes you can, as a dreamer of bright and holy dreams, console yourself for a thousand disappointments and a thousand sorrows.

A notable example of the modern Diogenes, the generous misanthropist, the benevolent Sonderling, we find in Count Schlabrendorf, one of those men who live what is called a wasted life, though perhaps it is only a narrow and prosaic utilitarianism which makes us believe that any life can be wholly wasted.

With the aid mainly of a biographical sketch by Count Schlabrendorf's friend, Varnhagen von Ense, we shall attempt the delineation of a character which was singular, and of a career which, though not crowded with adventures, was extraordinary.

Gustavus, Count von Schlabrendorf, was born on the 22nd of March, 1750, at Stettin, where his father held high office in connection with the government of the Prussian province, Pomerania. In 1755 the father of Gustavus was intrusted with still more important duties in Silesia. During the war which broke out in the following year the elder Schlabrendorf displayed all the talents of an able administrator, and gained the cordial approbation of Frederick the Great.

Having lived from his fifth year in Silesia, the younger Schlabrendorf always considered himself a Silesian. He received a careful education, first under his father's roof, and then at the Universities of Frankfort on the Oder and of Halle.

In his twentieth year Schlabrendorf lost his father. His eager and inquisitive spirit yearned to see a more varied and vivid world than the world of books, and his early independence, and his large fortune, enabled him to gratify the desire. After travelling through Germany, Switzerland, and France, he went to England, where he remained six years. Stein, subsequently so illustrious as a statesman, was for a time the companion of his English explorings and ramblings. In England he likewise formed a fervent and lasting friendship with Frederick Henry Jacobi, not the least gifted of those German philosophers who have proclaimed and vindicated the divine truths that can never be imprisoned in systems. Of England's political organizations, its philanthropic institutions, its whole social and religious being, Schlabrendorf was, when on English soil, an earnest student.

Of the compassion, the helpfulness, the devotedness which had from childhood characterised him, Schlabrendorf gave, when residing in England, a noble example. A German workman was tried for a highway robbery. There could be no doubt of his guilt, for he had been caught in the very act. It availed not for him, or for his advocates, to plead that he had been driven by starvation to the desperate deed, and that he had been unarmed: he was condemned to death by the cruel laws of the time. Schlabrendorf no sooner heard of his countryman's sad doom, which no appeal, however passionate, to those in authority could avert, than he hastened to succour and console the poor prisoner. He visited him repeatedly, and at last, to make the comfort he had to bestow the more effectual, he took up his abode with him in the gaol. The unfortunate creature he accompanied to the scaffold, and he whispered in his ear all pious and sustaining words, till the fatal moment came, when that ear grew dull for the things of earth. On hearing what Schlabrendorf had done, King George III. testified to the

count his esteem and admiration. And assuredly Schlabrendorf had shown himself in the rarest degree, and in a manner the most uncommon, a true minister of mercy.

On the eve of the French Revolution Schlabrendorf left England for France: and thenceforth France was his dwelling-place. He shared the enthusiastic hopes which the Revolution, at the outset, kindled, and he followed with intense interest the rapidly crowding events; but he felt no ambition to play, like his countryman Baron Clootz, a prominent part. Political action, and especially the stormy and perilous vocation of the demagogue, did not attract him: and he had the delicacy to perceive that the French should be allowed to settle their affairs in their own way, without the counsel or co-operation of foreigners.

Of the distinguished men with whom Schlabrendorf habitually associated in the early period of the Revolution, some of the chief were Brissot, Condorcet, Mercier, and George Forster. With the grand aspirations and the tragic fate of Brissot and Condorcet all readers are acquainted. Mercier and Forster are less known, and demand a few words.

Louis Sebastian Mercier was born in Paris, 6th June, 1740, and died there, 25th April, 1814. A Republican to the last, he just lived long enough to witness the downfall of Napoleon. An active and, at one time, an influential politician, it was nevertheless as a writer that he was famous. Guilty of many inconsistencies, he was yet always esteemed an honest man. His oddities, both of opinion and of conduct, fitted him well for companionship with Schlabrendorf. In politics he was a moderate, in literature an immoderate, revolutionist. He attacked with fury the literary gods of French idolatry, and, after the fashion of Diderot, he strove to substitute living nature for spurious classicality. In the form of a dream, he published a host of predictions, one of which, the adoption of round hats, was—not much to the advantage of grace in costume—certainly fulfilled. The independence of women he spoke against, maintaining that it would be best to bring women back to the condition in which they were in the time of the patriarchs. Herein perhaps he was not altogether wrong. In assailing the astronomical system of Copernicus and Newton, he was simply absurd, without being amusing. The same thing may be said of his antipathy to the diffusion of instruction among the people. By preferring the frog to the nightingale as a musician, and by asserting that you might judge of a man's character if you merely looked at his feet, he showed that the French, with all their wit, never succeed in being humorous. Spite of his paradoxes, his inconsequences, and his puerilities, to Mercier belongs the double glory of the literary reformer and the literary creator. He was right in crying to the French—"Prose is ours: its march is free: it is in our power to give to prose a more living character: the prose writers are our true poets: let them be bold enough, and the language will take accents altogether new." In his audacity as an innovator, Mercier endeavoured to convert literature into a painting of manners, into a sort of etching and sketching. This is, in effect, what the whole literature of the world has become, as the prelude to an immense and miraculous transfiguration.

An elaborate account of George Forster appeared some years ago in the *Westminster Review*. He was descended from the Scottish Lords Forrester, some members of whose house settled in Polish Prussia. He was born near Dantzic, 26th November, 1754, and died at Paris, 11th January, 1794. His father, Reinhold Forster, had abilities and acquirements most manifold, and a rashly adventurous spirit. Reinhold and his son George were the companions of Cook when that greatest of navigators started in 1772 on the second of his memorable voyages of discovery. During the voyage, partly through the fault of the elder Forster, he and his son were subjected to some indignities and many discomforts; and on their return to England they were not treated with much generosity by the government. The life of the son, like that of the father, was one long battle with poverty and pain. That talent which is so needful for the guidance of talent neither of them possessed. Their aims were exalted, their reputation was unsullied, but their hearts were tormented by the fever of unrest. Reinhold Forster, besides his eminence as a naturalist, could write and speak about twenty languages. Frederick the Great said of him that he was a very learned man, but that he had never seen a personage so unpolished. The discourse he made to the king, however, would indicate simplicity and frankness rather than coarseness:—"I have seen seven kings—four wild, and three tame kings; but none of them is equal to your majesty." George Forster, having acquired renown as a traveller, a naturalist, and a writer, was proceeding with the study of the Oriental languages when death snatched him away. In his youth scurvy had undermined his constitution; and in his manhood indigence, anxiety, excessive toil, fruitless or frustrated political schemes, did the rest. His wife, Theresa, was the daughter of the great scholar, Heyne. The same year George Forster died his widow married his friend, Ferdinand Huber. Theresa and her second husband were driven to literature for a livelihood, but the lady started with certain disadvantages, for the great Heyne had been so busy with Greek and Latin as to forget altogether to get his daughter properly instructed in German grammar and German orthography. A son of Ferdinand and Theresa Huber wrote a work on the English Universities, which was translated from the German by Francis William Newman.

His personal and political relations with Brissot, Condorcet, Mercier, George Forster, and men of similar character and sentiments, made—when the Terrorists were victorious—Schlabrendorf an object of suspicion. He was guilty besides of two crimes not to be pardoned: he was a foreigner, and a count. Into prison therefore he was thrown: and in prison for eighteen months he remained. To his fellow prisoners he was so unboundedly, so ungrudgingly kind, that they gave him the name of *The Benefactor*. He cheered the desponding, encouraged the timid, instructed, from his vast stores of knowledge, those willing to receive instruction, and gave money with a bountiful hand. Comforting others, he was himself wholly undismayed; but confinement, and the incessant spectacle of suffering, turned his hair grey. It was in prison that he began to wear the full beard which afterwards distinguished him.

Expecting every day to be summoned from his cell to the scaffold, he



converted, as far as he could, his property into bills of exchange, and gave these to one of his most intimate friends, a young German called Oelsner, who was allowed to visit him, though never sure whether Schlabrendorf's doom might not soon be his own.

"Take the money," cried Schlabrendorf, "and fly while you can. Use it as your own. If we meet again you can give me back what remains; but if I am guillotined regard it all as yours."

The friends parted, and Oelsner was able, without hindrance, to get beyond the French frontier. For a season he wandered in Italy, and was often in direst need. But the money intrusted to him by Schlabrendorf he sacredly guarded, took no smallest portion of it for his own requirements, and restored with joy and pride the sum undiminished to its owner when the men of blood had been overthrown.

Schlabrendorf's escape from the guillotine was strange, but almost more comical than strange. One morning the car—the sound of whose wheels was so well known to the ears of the prisoners—came rolling along. The name of Schlabrendorf was called. Where nearly all were prepared for their fate by indifference or by resolution, it was not difficult to be brave. But besides this feeling, so common at the period, Schlabrendorf had the strength and the resignation of the sage. He started to his feet, murmured not, was ready to die. To dress was the affair of a moment, but nowhere could his boots be found. Aided by the gaoler Schlabrendorf began a zealous search for them. Much annoyed, he at last said to the gaoler, "I cannot go without boots: that you see yourself. You can take me to-morrow. It will only make a difference of a day."

Neither Schlabrendorf himself, nor the gaoler, nor any one else, thought that aught more would be the result than the mere delay of the twenty-four hours. Away the car gloomily went, with its load of victims, and Schlabrendorf remained behind.

On the morrow Schlabrendorf was properly dressed, and duly booted. The car arrived, but Schlabrendorf's name was not on the list of the condemned—nor next morning—nor any subsequent morning. Naturally enough, for each list was supposed to make so clean a sweep as to render the repetition of a name unnecessary. The gaoler might have informed against Schlabrendorf, but the gaoler was rather a good fellow, and it was not exactly his business to play the odious part of the informer. So Schlabrendorf pined in prison till the downfall of Robespierre brought deliverance to him and to many more.

Probably it was Schlabrendorf's long imprisonment which, without engendering, deepened his love for cloistral seclusion, while leaving his yearning for social intercourse as warm as ever. The contradiction here is only apparent. Men may shrink from the mob, and from tumult, yet hunger for the companionship of those who are led toward them by spontaneous affinity. On coming to Paris from England, Schlabrendorf got down at the Hotel of the Two Sicilies, in Richelieu Street. A chamber on the second floor received him, and for more than thirty years that chamber was his only home. He seldom left it—never shut it. In his youth Schlabrendorf had

made whimsical experiments on his naturally robust constitution. For instance, he went sometimes forty-eight hours or more without food, under the notion that he thus acquired a Spartan hardiness and endurance. When, in his declining years, he had grown a true Diogenes, he was satisfied with the anchorite's fare, and with the beggar's attire. We are sorry to say that he was likewise rather too fond of the beggar's dirt, as if filth were a kind of embellishment to rags. Moreover, along with the miser's habits Schlabrendorf had some of the miser's feelings. He grudged all expenses, especially for his own wants. Hospitality, even in its most moderate form, he never exercised, the only entertainment he placed before his visitors being his chaotic scribblings and his interminable talk. As a compensation all visitors were welcome, even without an introduction. It is easy to see what was the grand defect of the man's nature. He had no concentration. He squandered himself on every imaginable subject—in every imaginable way. Absolute poverty might have made a man of him, though perchance we should then have had the gipsy, the vagabond, instead of the hermit. With the want of concentration was closely connected a want of personal attachment. For individuals Schlabrendorf cared little. He might esteem one individual more than another, but for the most part his likings were feeble, and without discrimination. At Paris he met a young and charming Scottish lady. They were speedily engaged. Schlabrendorf was to accompany his betrothed, her brother, and her sister-in-law to Switzerland. The passports were all ready, when Schlabrendorf was arrested, and that captivity began which so nearly brought him to the scaffold. Hereby Schlabrendorf's first and last matrimonial scheme was defeated. He did not take the mischance much to heart. The lady, too, found consolation in a happy marriage at Inverness, where some of her children and grandchildren doubtless still sojourn.

If his likings were feeble, his dislikes were equally feeble; yet with one signal exception; he hated Napoleon with all the intensity and bitterness of a man who viewed Napoleon as the foe of France, the foe of Germany, the foe of the human race. The estimate of Napoleon still wavers, inclining on the whole to be unjust. But, as a German patriot, and as a believer in the noblest principles for which the noblest champions of the French Revolution had contended and died, Schlabrendorf could not help abhorring Bonaparte. In various energetic shapes he expressed his abhorrence. In 1804 appeared, anonymously, a work entitled *Napoleon Bonaparte and the French People under his Consulate*. It was a book of sufficient merit to obtain the approbation of Goethe and of Johannes von Müller. For the first time the real nature of the Napoleonic despotism was unveiled, and its inevitable consequences were predicted. This production, which was as much a guiding light as an awakening voice, was wholly Schlabrendorf's, with the exception of some slight additions and corrections by Reichardt, a noted musical composer, who took the trouble and responsibility of bringing the work before the world. Schlabrendorf was too frank, too chivalrous, to plot against the French Emperor; but it is questionable whether the attacks on Napoleon which, by tongue or by pen, he made, or countenanced, or caused, were not offences against good taste and good faith. A foreigner owes

allegiance to the government under which he lives and which gives him protection. When, after the February Revolution, England offered an asylum to Ledru Rollin, this eminent politician forthwith devoted his leisure to a book on the decay of England. A very refined and delicate mode of showing gratitude! Louis Blanc has had a more exalted conception of the exile's attitude toward the land which shields and shelters him. The worthy Count Schlabrendorf therefore behaved with the most reprehensible unseemliness in hurling his diatribes at Napoleon. Often petty, often savage in his vengeance, the Emperor had yet the sense to leave the garrulous and grumbling German unharmed. He saw that the eccentricity of the count's discourses defeated their violence.

The disastrous expedition to Russia, in 1812, having broken Napoleon's arms and chained his feet, the brave Germans thought the time had arrived to give the naughty Emperor a sound thrashing. In this opinion Count Schlabrendorf concurred. He therefore expressed a valorous desire to take part in the valorous operation of kicking the prostrate and manacled Emperor. But there were obstacles in the way which perhaps Schlabrendorf was not very anxious to overcome; for the man, admirable and estimable though he was, had a considerable dose of ostentation, affectation, and vanity. At Paris he was a meteor, flashing fitfully, and men gazed in wonder thereat; in Germany he would have been an asteroid, so nebulous and so remote as to be almost invisible through the steams rising from rivers of blood. Meanwhile events rushed rapidly on. The Allies entered Paris in the spring of 1814. All the distinguished generals and statesmen called on Schlabrendorf, who was moreover decorated with the Iron Cross, the Prussian order which had been founded the previous year. On the second entrance of the Allies into Paris, in 1815, Schlabrendorf seems really to have been seized by the longing to return to the land of his fathers, there to live, there to die. But he was fettered to Paris by inveterate habits, and, with his incorrigible tendency to procrastination, he lingered and lingered till it was too late to depart.

In the summer of 1824 the state of Schlabrendorf's health began to alarm his friends. At their request, and by the advice of his physician, Dr. Spurzheim, he went to reside with a surgeon at Batignoles. It was the first time for ten years that our Diogenes had left his chamber in the Hotel of the Two Sicilies. But the change of air seemed to hasten, not to retard, the end. On the 21st of August, 1824, hopeful and happy—all lofty thoughts and pious emotions strengthening him—he died. His life is supposed to have been shortened by his long confinement and his irregularities of diet. When, however, death summons not a man to depart till his seventy-fifth year, we had best accuse no foe but old age. Schlabrendorf was buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery. Many crowded to pay, by their presence, what honour they could to the dead. The President of the Protestant Consistory at Paris preached a sermon, in which Schlabrendorf's virtues as a man, and his services as a patriot and philanthropist, were duly applauded. Schlabrendorf's stock of ready money was so exhausted that the expenses of his funeral had, in the first instance, to be paid by the Prussian ambassador.

Occupied ceaselessly with projects the most chimerical, the most colossal, none of which he ever realised, Schlabrendorf unfortunately neglected the most prosaic and most urgent of all his projects—that of making his will. Every day was fixed for this commonplace achievement, yet day chased day, and the will was not made. Schlabrendorf had busied himself in gathering all the publications bearing on the French Revolution, or illustrative of it. He had succeeded in forming a collection of the rarest and most valuable documents, amounting to several thousands. This important historical treasure he intended to bequeath to a Prussian University. He likewise had designed to found some schools. Indeed, it seems as if all his property was to have been consecrated to philanthropical purposes. But no will was found, except one which Schlabrendorf had drawn up fifty years before his death, and which therefore could not be held as expressing his latest desires and resolutions. Even this will was disputed by the hungry and quarrelsome heirs. Hence endless and ruinous litigation. No portion of the heritage went to any of the objects for which Schlabrendorf had lived, and for which his fortune had long, in his imagination, been devoted. His books relating to the French Revolution were sold by auction, and scattered hither and thither. What an irreparable loss to historical research!

The heritage itself was somewhat diminished by Schlabrendorf's peculiar habits. A bank in Germany had to transmit twenty thousand francs to him. He was informed that the money was at his service whenever he chose to have it sent. Thinking that there was a slight overcharge in the percentage demanded for trouble, he refused to receive the money at all. The bank, which had the highest character, attempted to justify its conduct. But Schlabrendorf, deeming himself cheated, scorned to listen to the declaration and the defence. In this state the affair was left for many years, and though the conclusion of the history is not known, it is supposed that Schlabrendorf, from the most childish caprice, was content to forfeit his claim to the money. Numerous large sums he lost in a similar manner.

Meanly penurious, yet careless about losing, Schlabrendorf was equally heedless about the risks of losing he encountered.

Once Schlabrendorf was travelling in Germany with one of the Gmelins, a family of great scientific and general eminence, when Schlabrendorf and his friend arrived at Rastatt, where they intended to pass the night. They found the inn crowded and noisy. With difficulty they got the landlord to give them, near the main entrance, a small room, which was usually sacred not to slumber, but to lumber. The two wearied travellers were glad to get possession even of an extemporised bedroom. Undressing, Schlabrendorf hung up his coat on the door-post. For the sake of security, as well as of quiet, Gmelin wanted to shut the door. Schlabrendorf assured him that he could never sleep when the door was shut, so the door was left open. Soon Schlabrendorf had sunk into the profoundest unconsciousness; but poor Gmelin could not close his eyes. Jangling and wrangling sounds ceased not. Every reveller who with unsteady steps blundered against the door of the small room Gmelin was inclined to take for a robber or a murderer. Next morning Gmelin told Schlabrendorf all his troubles and terrors.

Schlabrendorf laughed, then took out of his pocket several rolls of gold and bank bills for thirty thousand gulden. Yet Schlabrendorf's rest had not been by fear about all this money either prevented or disturbed.

That notwithstanding his stinginess on the one hand, and his recklessness on the other, Schlabrendorf generously gave, a thousand and a thousand times, is what must make him dear, very dear to us. The needy had only to apply, and were sure of being relieved. A Magdeburg merchant was in prison at Paris for debt. His daughter, thirteen years old, was induced to bring her father's sad case before Schlabrendorf. The sum required was eight thousand francs. Schlabrendorf had only four thousand francs at the moment. He immediately, however, borrowed the other four thousand, and the daughter had soon the delight of seeing her father at liberty. His countrymen, especially the Prussians, and, in a still higher degree, the Silesians, he regarded as having the first claim on his loving kindness. To German scholars, German artists, above all to German handicraftsmen, he deemed it his divinest vocation to be the almoner. Prussian prisoners of war had a supreme interest for him. The Protestant churches at Paris, the schools and charitable institutions connected with them, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Morality, the Bible Society—all rejoiced in his munificence. Besides his other innumerable gifts there were few public subscriptions from which he held back. He was hence accused of parading his bounties. Our alms should be in secret, no doubt, and the glare and the blare of our modern advertising are fatal, as well to what is delicate as to what is godlike in the holiest of human duties. But let him who is largely an almsgiver in secret be as largely as he chooses an almsgiver in public, without being subjected to the charge of Pharisaic ostentation.

What, with concentration and persistency, Count Schlabrendorf might have been it would be profitless to conjecture; and it is almost equally profitless trying to ascertain what was his exact intellectual worth. Those called originals have often less originality than their neighbours, their aberrations being usually not the excess but the defect of force. Hence how the career of such men contrasts with the rich and rounded life of a Shakspeare or a Rubens. Schlabrendorf planned books, and scribbled half illegible scraps of books; but as he did not write the books, we must, from courtesy to his friends, believe that the books, if he had written them, would have been remarkable. His knowledge was great and various, his judgment on most subjects sound and sagacious, his ideas were often ingenious. These things, however, do not of themselves enable us to determine whether he would have excelled as an author, or was profound as a philosopher. The fragments of Schlabrendorf's written utterances, given by Varnhagen von Ense, are notable only for the singularity of the expression and the barbarity of the style. Of the prodigious opulence of faculty Schlabrendorf is said to have manifested in conversation we cannot form an opinion, for Schlabrendorf had no Boswell to record his sayings. He may sometimes, as is vaunted, have displayed a gnomic pith and point, sometimes a rhetorical plenitude, sometimes a pictorial splendour, thrilling, enthralling the hearer, while instructing him. All this is possible; but as we never yet met any man who had the



reputation of being a clever talker who was not an intolerable bore, we are afraid that Schlabrendorf must frequently have been rather wearisome. There is a tradition that early one evening Schlabrendorf, candle in hand, accompanied to the top of the stairs his friend, William von Humboldt, who had called on him. Next day, at dawn, the two learned Germans were still jabbering away, at the top of the stairs, to each other. If this tradition has some basis of truth, it must increase our admiration for the proverbial patience of the German nature and nation.

However, what Schlabrendorf was intellectually is not a thing of much moment. *Diogenes* means *Jove-born*; and, living as a Diogenes, Schlabrendorf showed that he was born of Jove; that he had a divine humanity; that love for his brethren was the leading inspiration of his actions. What, after all, matters it whether a man is eccentric or not if he proves his affection for what is religiously exalted and morally beautiful by the wealth and catholicity of his sympathies? Simply as a *Sonderling* Schlabrendorf is a curiosity, and as a *Sonderling* we have depicted him. But it is for his loving kindness that we revere him. He cannot be placed beside the great men of his country. Let us, however, give him far nobler honour: let us enthrone him along with the Apostles of Mercy, who are the children of every country, yet who belong to no country except the heavenly.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

---

### PAINTERS' PERILS.

WE determined to shoulder our knapsacks and start off into North Wales by the Great Western Railway, and go as far as it would take us. After spending a pleasant time wandering by the Wye, we took seats one very wet morning on the mail-coach from Hereford to Aberystwith, which we resolved to make our head-quarters for the main object of our expedition, viz., the bringing back a folio of sketches.

One of our first excursions was, naturally, to the Devil's Bridge, a well-known spot, some few miles inland from the coast. We tramped out there, secured our quarters at the comfortable inn, and immediately started, with all the enthusiasm for which in those days we were both celebrated, to explore and mark down the choicest localities and picturesque points where we might best avail ourselves of what talent we had in the use of brush or pencil.

It is a vain speculation, I imagine, endeavouring to find out why the devil has built so many bridges, scooped out so many punch-bowls, dykes, basins, and bays, or driven his spade and pickaxe into so many chasms and passes; but certain it is, that he has had a considerable hand in moulding some of the boldest and most paintable parts of the world, if we are to take the fact of his name being associated with them as a proof that they were the results of his superintendence.

I will not stop to recapitulate even some of those most familiar to travellers and artists; all that it is necessary for me now to do is to describe slightly the

nature of this particular record of Satan's skill and handiwork. At the time of which I am speaking, and when my old chum, Michael Hallidown, and I were a good many years younger, this spot seemed to me to be a very devilish sort of place indeed. "Awfully wild and grand;" "A wonderful place for sketching," and other rapturous ejaculations were poured forth, characteristic of the aforesaid enthusiasm. We had not been over the St. Gothard then, nor caught a glimpse of the thousand and one far wilder and more picturesque localities bearing his Satanic Majesty's cognomen. Knowing nothing better, it did well enough for us, and certainly the freshness of our enjoyment was ample compensation for our ignorance. It was a bliss never surpassed by all our increased artistic powers and wider knowledge of fine scenery.

We have been for many sketching and walking trips since then, but we have never had a jollier time. It is the old story, and the "Devil's Bridge" near Aberystwith, viewed through the medium of our youth and vigour, was magnified into all that was requisite for our happiness. Green peas, I suppose, have still the same flavour to fellows of one-and-twenty that they have ever had; the houris of the ballet must still appear the priceless pearls we then thought them; but clap another score of years upon our heads—the peas are *fade*, and the opera-dancers very ordinary paste,—a spurious imitation, which the microscope of time enables us easily to detect from the genuine jewel. And so the "Devil's Bridge" was delightful.

We descended the wood-clad ravine, which led down to the rocky mountain stream, whose waterfall, at the furthest limit of our view, came sparkling, dancing, gurgling, and dashing, and doing much of what Southey said the water does at Lodore. This, we conceived, would be the most attractive feature for a sketch, and to get a view of it from a good point of vantage was our main object. We reached the bed of the river, and found no difficulty in crossing from side to side, by hopping, skipping, and jumping upon the big boulders and rocks, that, from the comparative low state of the stream, were exposed in masses of various size and form, round which the waters gurgled and eddied bright, and glittering, and with a music new and delightful to our ears.

The fall itself was a meagre affair after all, but pretty enough to look at; we had not then learned that, as a rule, waterfalls do not make good pictures. But what had we learned? Why, this was almost the very first time that either of us had ever seen a mountain stream, and it would have been rather strange if, loving Nature as we did, we should not have eagerly desired to bring a reminiscence of it away.

The rocky ledge over which the water poured was not above half covered, but it was very pretty, and the vista leading up to it, shut in by steeply-shelving crags, surmounted by young ash and oak trees, here and there almost arching across it, formed a lovely frame-work to the central point of light. We explored the spot thoroughly, and found, in most places, that the banks of the river were so precipitous as to be inaccessible, and, having gone down its course some distance, we came upon the top of a second waterfall deeper than the first, and a place that we felt it would be by no means pleasant to take a "header" over.

We were obliged to retrace our steps across the straggling boulders before we could regain the upper bank, where the path lay through the wood by which we had descended. In fact, upon closer search, we discovered that it was nearly the only place where it was possible to reach the stream itself, so closely was it shut in by rock and wood. The well-worn path brought us with such little difficulty to this point of access that we were scarcely conscious of the trouble we might have had to get down to the water if we had not struck this particular way.

We at last determined on the place from which we would make our sketch. It was one of the largest, flat top table-like sort of rocks, nearly in the centre of the stream, and easily reached by aid of some half-dozen stepping stones. This would do capitally; the composition and effect were perfect, and we made up our minds to set to work upon this pet subject early next morning, with that determination which the youthful aspirant to the noble art of painting is known to possess.

As soon as it was light the following day, Mike came to me with the most forlorn expression of countenance.

"It rains like mad, my dear fellow—coming down in torrents; not a chance of putting your head outside the door for the next twenty-four hours, I can tell you; what a country this is for rain! I shall go to bed again."

Mike was not good at early rising, and it was nothing but his artistic enthusiasm which could have torn him from his bed so soon after dawn to look at the state of the weather. Yes, it was a soaker, but it could not damp our ardour; and when, a little before noon, the clouds began to lift, and rays of sunshine glittered across the hill sides, lighting up the valley which lay in all its autumnal beauty at our feet, we made preparations for a start.

Burning to get to work, we were soon on our way, heavily laden with necessary and unnecessary paraphernalia, to take up the position we had settled on the day before. Very spongy was the ground, and though it had ceased raining, the brisk wind, as it drifted heavy masses of the remnants of the rain-clouds across the sky, also besprinkled us pretty freely with water from the shimmering leaves. Arrived on the bank from which our bit of tableland was accessible, we were somewhat dismayed to find our stepping-stones of yesterday not nearly so numerous, nor so much exposed. The river had risen, but we thought nothing of this, and with only a slight addition here and there to the length of our strides, and an occasional foot-wetting, without much difficulty we reached our station in the middle of the stream before described. Here we unlimbered, arranged our stools side by side, got out frames and blocks, and commenced our labour in earnest. The scene looked far finer than it had done on our previous visit. There was more water coming over the fall, and the ever-changing clouds and sunshine gave an immense variety to the light and shade, which though puzzling to the painter, yet greatly enhanced the attractions of the spot. Mike and I worked pretty equally, and had finished our pencil outline much about the same time, when a passing shower obliged us to seek temporary refuge under our sketching umbrellas, which we had left on the bank, for it was of course impossible to stick them in the hard rock where we were

sitting. We got rather more wet-footed this time in going to and fro, but neither of us seemed to notice that the river was still rising. Glorious sunshine burst out after the rain, and we were soon again intent on our drawing, perfectly undaunted by the dripping condition of everything around us.

We chatted away gaily enough, making mild juvenile jokes about this being a sketch in water-colours indeed; and that Winsor and Newton need not have spent so much time in perfecting their moist cakes, if they were to be used in Wales, etc. The rock on which we sat had a smooth level top, about four feet long by three broad; admirably adapted for our little settlement. We had our materials scattered about us; our pipes were laid down at our side until wanted again; the colour-box, water-bottle, etc., quite handy to our reach. There was no more rain now; the sun began to dry up the superabundant moisture; the wind dropped, and the weather settled into one of those warm, pleasant, quiet autumnal afternoons, when sketching out of doors becomes, to my thinking, the most enjoyable occupation in the world.

Mike, who seldom or never looks at Nature when he is painting (though he thinks he does), if we may judge from the result, was poring over his paper with nose almost on its surface, "pin-fiddling," as we used to call it, when niggling very much. I myself had been working for the last few minutes at a corner of my sketch, and had not noticed the waterfall for some little time. Suddenly, glancing up at it, I was amazed, and cried out, "By jingo, old fellow, look at the fall now; that's the way we must have it. That's something like a waterfall, if you please!"

It had increased tenfold, one huge boiling sheet of brown peat-coloured foam came shooting over the full extent of the gap through which the stream at its highest level rushed from the mountains. It was now strikingly grand; but our admiration for the sight which had brought us simultaneously to our feet, drawing-boards in hand, was short-lived, for Mike, more observant of what would follow than I, pointed to the water just below us, saying—

"We must look sharp and get out of this, or else we shall be washed away!"

"Yes," I replied; "but how are we to do it?" for as I spoke I saw that all our stepping-stones had disappeared, and the foaming, seething mass was tearing savagely all around us.

Seated as we had been, only some twenty yards away from the fall thus suddenly swollen, we perceived that the river had of course immediately been influenced by the extra supply poured into it; the result was, that as we spoke, and looked about bewildered, the water rose like magic to our feet.

In far less time than it has taken to write these words, it was half-way up the sides of our table-rock, and every instant brought it horribly nearer to the top. As we turned and looked hopelessly from side to side for some means of retreat, the bubbling, bottled-porter-like fluid wetted our boots. Together we stooped to make a grab at the colour boxes; as we did this, an extra swirl washed them out of our reach, and they disappeared in a second.

Being certain at the least of a ducking, and instinctively feeling that my sketch must be saved, if possible, from such a contingency, with a desperate effort I flung it high up into the trees and brushwood on the bank by which we had descended, which lay just abreast of our rock. It was only a stone's throw, and the board fell with a bit of a clatter safely on the shore amongst the trees. Hallidown instantly followed my example, and with like success; but by the time we had performed this exploit the water was well up round our ankles, rising momentarily higher and higher, lugging at us with such a tearing force that our foothold we could feel was fast giving way.

Something must be done. "Mike," I cried, "help me with this stick" (for by some accident I found my stick in my hand), "and I'll try and step on to the next stone, towards the shore. I know whereabouts it is, and though deeper down than this, the water won't be above my head; see if you can come too—keep tight hold of the stick."

The words had scarcely left my lips when, proceeding to carry out my vain intention of striking the nearest stone, my legs were washed from under me, and I was turned head over heels into the deep, boiling, Vandyke-brown-coloured waters, which gurgled in my ears, and glistened in my eyes. I was spun round like a cork, washed away like a fly, and received two or three blows on my body from what I knew to be the rough projecting rocks in and about the bottom of the stream.

Now, fortunately, I was a pretty good water-dog, and so, not losing my presence of mind, things, I suppose, flashed into it with the rapidity of lightning, in a way that they would not otherwise have done, for I can perfectly remember being sensible of the danger there would be of getting stunned if my head came in collision with any of the boulders. Likewise, I remembered also, long before I came to the surface, that there was another and deeper fall but a few hundred yards down the stream.

These were the dangers that really occurred to me, the water as it were appearing quite a secondary consideration. I had no fear of drowning if my senses were not knocked out of me, and I found myself rising with my hands involuntarily held over my head as if to protect it, for it must be borne in mind that I was being carried forward by the rapid at a tremendous pace. It is impossible to describe a tithe of my sensations during the four or five seconds which at the most perhaps elapsed while I was head downwards. With a few more thumps and bumps, especially on the shins and knees, and spinings round in eddies, to the top I came, travelling down the stream more like a cork, as I have said, than anything else.

The second fall which, from my previous exploration of the spot, I knew I was speedily approaching, and which, if I went over, I knew must inevitably finish me, was the source of my great anxiety. Swimming was out of the question. If I attempted to strike out for the shore, as I did at first, my hands and arms came into such instantaneous collision with half or wholly hidden rocks, that I again feared being disabled. It was a moment of extreme peril, for a very few more yards would bring me to the top of the second fall. Just then, when hope seemed utterly flying from me, and I was endeavouring to collect myself, and prepare, if possible, for the big descent, suddenly, and



with a tremendous access of power, the water swirled, and spun me round as if I had been a top for a minute or more. As it seemed to me, I was in a regular little whirlpool, but not very far from one of the precipitous sides of the river. I was in very deep water now, and I made one or two desperate efforts to swim, and from the centre I managed to get to the edge of the whirlpool; then, as if by magic, I found myself in calm water, within arms' length of the aforesaid precipitous side. There was no finger-hold, however, or none that could be called such, but still, with the proverbial desperation of the drowning man clutching at a straw, I did somehow manage to hook my nails into a cranny, and then by great luck got a very slight footing. The water, though up to my shoulders, was not pulling at me now, and I felt able to rest and to look about me.

As I did so, the first thing that met my gaze was Mike coming down the stream, full pelt in my wake. Being a tall, big man, twice my size, he had not lost his original footing quite so quickly as I had done, so was a little behind me. The torrent, however, made little less ado with him than it had done with me, and directly he reached the place where the eddy was, he, too, became a helpless cork, gyrating in its midst. I shouted, "Strike out!" He heard me, and did so, and in another moment was by my side a little lower down the stream, holding on, as the sailors say, by his eyebrows. We had a parley what was to be done. A yard higher or lower than where we were the current would again catch us, and we should be for a second time exposed to the danger of being carried over the other fall. Then occurred one of those ludicrous incidents which I am apt to think do sometimes go hand in hand with the most imminent peril: indeed, despite its extreme danger, the whole affair had not been devoid of a certain air of comicality. But now we could scarce refrain from grinning silently to each other, as we saw our two caps come whirling down the stream exactly as their owners had done. The eddy caught them, and they were spun round and round for a minute or two, and then floated placidly up alongside of us. I made a grab at mine, caught it, and as if I was not wet enough, gave myself an extra shower bath, by trying to put it on my head full of water. Then I made a feeble attempt to throw it on to the trees, which hung not so very far above us. I failed to effect its lodgment, and it fell for a second time into the rapids. A second time, it was swept into the eddy, whirled round as before, and a second time brought up quietly to my side. As if this were not ludicrous enough, precisely the very same thing happened to Mike's wide-awake. This time we were determined not to lose them, and jammed them firmly on to our heads.

Still, what was to be done? We could not stay there till the flood subsided; in fact, the chances were it would increase; and sure enough, as we were consulting, it gradually did so, for it soon enabled me, with a plunge and a dash, to gain a firmer resting-place near to some overhanging boughs. I stretched up my hand and could just get hold of a leaf. With the utmost care I pulled it down until I caught a twig, and then a slightly thicker branch, and then a thicker still. I called to Mike to remain quiet, and by degrees I had a firm bough within my grasp. Yet the sides of the rock were

very precipitous, and though not high just here, the earthy top with its protruding roots of trees was much above my reach. Nevertheless, with great caution, I brought the ash sapling well over the face of the little cliff, and, being a light weight, it was luckily strong enough to bear me as I scaled the ascent by its aid.

"Hurrah!" we both cried; and I ran to one of the similar young trees which grew just above my friend's position. This I bent over with equal caution until he could grasp it, but being some stones heavier than I, I was obliged to give him a second one, which eventually he also caught, and with the assistance of the two, and a hand from me, he was at last brought safely on to dry ground.

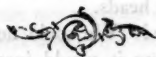
We congratulated ourselves, and instinctively felt in the breast-pocket of our shooting-coats for the whisky-flasks. They were both gone. So thoroughly had we been turned topsy-turvy that our pockets were emptied as completely as if we had been walking blindfolded through Seven Dials.

There is little more to be said. It was a very narrow and a very lucky escape. Quite certain it is, that although actual swimming was out of the question, yet had we not both been adepts in the art, and thoroughly used to the water, we should inevitably have been drowned.

The presence of mind which we retained from not finding ourselves completely out of our element would have been denied to any but swimmers, and then nothing could have saved us. Besides the ducking, a few sharp cuts and bruises, and the loss of all our sketching traps, nothing worse came of our mishap. Nay, we did not lose quite all, for on regaining the bank, where we had thrown our drawings, we found them but little injured; and they remain in both our portfolios, to us interesting relics of this our first experience of landscape-painters' perils in a spot which, had we been superstitious, we might indeed have believed was one where the devil still had sway and influence.

Shall I add the moral? Learn above all things to swim, and never trust the bed of a mountain torrent after heavy rains:

W. W. FENN.



## THE LAST LORDS OF GARDONAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DR. AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

## PART II.

**B**EFORE mounting their horses, Ludovico held a consultation with his men as to what course they had better adopt; whether they should depart at once or search the neighbourhood for the girl. Both suggestions seemed to be attended with danger. If they delayed their departure, they might be attacked by the peasantry, who by this time were doubtless in hot pursuit of them; and if they returned to the baron without Teresa, they were almost certain to receive a severe punishment for failing in their enterprise. At last the idea struck Ludovico that a good round lie might possibly succeed with the baron and do something to avert his anger, while there was little hope of its in the slightest manner availing with the enraged peasantry. He therefore gave the order for his men to mount their horses, resolving to tell the baron that Teresa had escaped from the flames, and had begged their assistance, but that a number of armed inhabitants of Bormio chancing to approach, she had sought their protection. A great portion of this statement could be substantiated by his men, as they still fully believed that the figure in white which they had so indistinctly seen was the girl herself. Ludovico and his men during their homeward journey had great difficulty in crossing the mountains, in consequence of a heavy fall of snow (for it was now late in the autumn). Next day they arrived at the castle of Gardonal.

It would be difficult to describe the rage of the baron when he heard that his retainers had been unsuccessful in their mission. He ordered Ludovico to be thrown into a dungeon, where he remained for more than a month, and was only then liberated in consequence of the baron needing his services for some expedition requiring special skill and courage. The other men were also punished, though less severely than their leader, on whom, of course, they laid all the blame.

For some time after Ludovico's return, the baron occupied himself in concocting schemes, not only to secure the girl Teresa (for he fully believed the account Ludovico had given of her escape), but to revenge himself on the inhabitants of Bormio for the part they had taken in the affair; and it was to carry out these schemes that he liberated Ludovico from prison.

The winter had passed, and the spring sun was rapidly melting the snows on the mountains, when one morning three travel-stained men, having the appearance of respectable burghers, arrived at the Hospice, and requested to be allowed an interview with the Innominato. A messenger was despatched to the castle, who shortly afterwards returned, saying that his master desired the visitors should immediately be admitted into his presence. When they arrived at the castle they found him fully prepared to receive them, a handsome repast being spread out for their refreshment. At first the travellers seemed under some restraint; but this was soon dispelled by the friendly courtesy of the astrologer. After partaking of the viands which

had been set before them, the Innominato inquired the object of their visit. One of them, who had been evidently chosen as spokesman, then rose from his chair, and addressed their host as follows :

" We have been sent to your excellency by the inhabitants of Bormio, as a deputation, to ask your advice and assistance in a strait we are in at present. Late in the autumn of last year, the Baron Conrad, feudal lord of the Engadin, was on some not very honest expedition in our neighbourhood, when by chance he saw a very beautiful girl, of the name of Teresa Biffi, whose father occupied a large farm about half a league from the town. The baron, it appears, became so deeply enamoured of the girl that he afterwards sent a messenger to her father with an offer of marriage for his daughter. Biffi, knowing full well the infamous reputation of the baron, unhesitatingly declined his proposal, and in such indignant terms as to arouse the tyrant's anger to the highest pitch. Determining not only to possess himself of the girl, but to avenge the insult he had received, he sent a body of armed retainers, who in the night attacked the farmer's house, and endeavoured to effect an entrance by breaking open the door. Finding they could not succeed, and after murdering one of the servants who had been sent to a neighbouring village to give the alarm, they set fire to the house, and with the exception of two children who contrived to escape, the whole family, including the young girl herself, perished in the flames. It appears, however, that the baron (doubtless through his agents) received a false report that the young girl had escaped, and was taken under the protection of some of the inhabitants of Bormio. In consequence, he sent another body of armed men, who arrived in the night at the house of the podesta, and contrived to make his only son, a boy of about fifteen years old, a prisoner, bearing him off to the baron's castle. They left word, that unless Teresa Biffi was placed in their power before the first day of May, not only would the youth be put to death, but the baron would also wreak vengeance on the whole town. On the perpetration of this last atrocity, we again applied to the government of Milan for protection ; but although our reception was most courteous, and we were promised assistance, we have too good reason to doubt our receiving it. Certainly up to the present time no steps have been taken in the matter, nor has a single soldier been sent, although the time named for the death of the child has nearly expired. The townsmen therefore, having heard of your great wisdom and power, your willingness to help those who are in distress, as well as to protect the weak and oppressed, have sent us to ask you to take them under your protection ; as the baron is not a man to scruple at putting such a threat into execution."

The Innominato, who had listened to the delegate with great patience and attention, told him that he had no soldiers or retainers at his orders ; while the baron, whose wicked life was known to him, had many.

" But your excellency has great wisdom, and from all we have heard, we feel certain that you could protect us."

" Your case," said the Innominato, " is a very sad one, I admit, and you certainly ought to be protected from the baron's machinations. I will not disguise from you that I have the power to help you. Tell the unhappy

podesta that he need be under no alarm as to his son's safety, and that I will oblige the baron to release him. My art tells me that the boy is still alive, though confined in prison. As for your friends who sent you to me, tell them that the baron shall do them no harm. All you have to do is, to contrive some means by which the baron may hear that the girl Teresa Biffi has been placed by me where he will never find her without my permission."

"But Teresa Biffi," said the delegate, "perished with her father; and the baron will wreak his vengeance both on you and us, when he finds you cannot place the girl in his power."

"Fear nothing, but obey my orders," said the Innominato. "Do what I have told you, and I promise you shall have nothing to dread from him. The sooner you carry out my directions the better."

The deputation now returned to Bormio, and related all that had taken place at their interview with the Innominato. Although the result of their mission was scarcely considered satisfactory, they determined, after much consideration, to act on the astrologer's advice. But how to carry it out was a very difficult matter. This was, however, overcome by one of the chief inhabitants of the town—a man of most determined courage—offering himself as a delegate to the baron, to convey to him the Innominato's message. Without hesitation the offer was gratefully accepted, and the next day he started on his journey. No sooner had he arrived at the castle of Gardonal, and explained the object of his mission, than he was ushered into the presence of the baron, whom he found in the great hall, surrounded by a numerous body of armed men.

"Well," said the baron, as soon as the delegate had entered, "have your townspeople come to their senses at last, and sent me the girl Teresa?"

"No, they have not, baron," was the reply; "for she is not in their custody. All they can do is to inform you where you may possibly receive some information about her."

"And where may that be?"

"The only person who knows where she may be found is the celebrated astrologer who lives in a castle near Lecco."

"Ah now, you are trifling with me," said the baron, sternly. "You must be a great fool or a very bold man to try such an experiment as that."

"I am neither the one nor the other, your excellency; nor am I trifling with you. What I have told you is the simple truth."

"And how did you learn it?"

"From the Innominato's own lips."

"Then you applied to him for assistance against me," said the baron, furiously.

"That is hardly correct, your excellency," said the delegate. "It is true we applied to him for advice as to the manner in which we should act in case you should attack us, and put your threat into execution respecting the son of the Podesta."

"And what answer did he give you?"

"Just what I have told you—that he alone knows where Teresa Biffi is



had been set before them, the Innominato inquired the object of their visit. One of them, who had been evidently chosen as spokesman, then rose from his chair, and addressed their host as follows :

"We have been sent to your excellency by the inhabitants of Bormio, as a deputation, to ask your advice and assistance in a strait we are in at present. Late in the autumn of last year, the Baron Conrad, feudal lord of the Engadin, was on some not very honest expedition in our neighbourhood, when by chance he saw a very beautiful girl, of the name of Teresa Biffi, whose father occupied a large farm about half a league from the town. The baron, it appears, became so deeply enamoured of the girl that he afterwards sent a messenger to her father with an offer of marriage for his daughter. Biffi, knowing full well the infamous reputation of the baron, unhesitatingly declined his proposal, and in such indignant terms as to arouse the tyrant's anger to the highest pitch. Determining not only to possess himself of the girl, but to avenge the insult he had received, he sent a body of armed retainers, who in the night attacked the farmer's house, and endeavoured to effect an entrance by breaking open the door. Finding they could not succeed, and after murdering one of the servants who had been sent to a neighbouring village to give the alarm, they set fire to the house, and with the exception of two children who contrived to escape, the whole family, including the young girl herself, perished in the flames. It appears, however, that the baron (doubtless through his agents) received a false report that the young girl had escaped, and was taken under the protection of some of the inhabitants of Bormio. In consequence, he sent another body of armed men, who arrived in the night at the house of the podesta, and contrived to make his only son, a boy of about fifteen years old, a prisoner, bearing him off to the baron's castle. They left word, that unless Teresa Biffi was placed in their power before the first day of May, not only would the youth be put to death, but the baron would also wreak vengeance on the whole town. On the perpetration of this last atrocity, we again applied to the government of Milan for protection ; but although our reception was most courteous, and we were promised assistance, we have too good reason to doubt our receiving it. Certainly up to the present time no steps have been taken in the matter, nor has a single soldier been sent, although the time named for the death of the child has nearly expired. The townsmen therefore, having heard of your great wisdom and power, your willingness to help those who are in distress, as well as to protect the weak and oppressed, have sent us to ask you to take them under your protection ; as the baron is not a man to scruple at putting such a threat into execution."

The Innominato, who had listened to the delegate with great patience and attention, told him that he had no soldiers or retainers at his orders ; while the baron, whose wicked life was known to him, had many.

"But your excellency has great wisdom, and from all we have heard, we feel certain that you could protect us."

"Your case," said the Innominato, "is a very sad one, I admit, and you certainly ought to be protected from the baron's machinations. I will not disguise from you that I have the power to help you. Tell the unhappy

podesta that he need be under no alarm as to his son's safety, and that I will oblige the baron to release him. My art tells me that the boy is still alive, though confined in prison. As for your friends who sent you to me, tell them that the baron shall do them no harm. All you have to do is, to contrive some means by which the baron may hear that the girl Teresa Biffi has been placed by me where he will never find her without my permission."

"But Teresa Biffi," said the delegate, "perished with her father; and the baron will wreak his vengeance both on you and us, when he finds you cannot place the girl in his power."

"Fear nothing, but obey my orders," said the Innominato. "Do what I have told you, and I promise you shall have nothing to dread from him. The sooner you carry out my directions the better."

The deputation now returned to Bormio, and related all that had taken place at their interview with the Innominato. Although the result of their mission was scarcely considered satisfactory, they determined, after much consideration, to act on the astrologer's advice. But how to carry it out was a very difficult matter. This was, however, overcome by one of the chief inhabitants of the town—a man of most determined courage—offering himself as a delegate to the baron, to convey to him the Innominato's message. Without hesitation the offer was gratefully accepted, and the next day he started on his journey. No sooner had he arrived at the castle of Gardonal, and explained the object of his mission, than he was ushered into the presence of the baron, whom he found in the great hall, surrounded by a numerous body of armed men.

"Well," said the baron, as soon as the delegate had entered, "have your townspeople come to their senses at last, and sent me the girl Teresa?"

"No, they have not, baron," was the reply; "for she is not in their custody. All they can do is to inform you where you may possibly receive some information about her."

"And where may that be?"

"The only person who knows where she may be found is the celebrated astrologer who lives in a castle near Lecco."

"Ah now, you are trifling with me," said the baron, sternly. "You must be a great fool or a very bold man to try such an experiment as that."

"I am neither the one nor the other, your excellency; nor am I trifling with you. What I have told you is the simple truth."

"And how did you learn it?"

"From the Innominato's own lips."

"Then you applied to him for assistance against me," said the baron, furiously.

"That is hardly correct, your excellency," said the delegate. "It is true we applied to him for advice as to the manner in which we should act in case you should attack us, and put your threat into execution respecting the son of the Podesta."

"And what answer did he give you?"

"Just what I have told you—that he alone knows where Teresa Biffi is

to be found, and that you could not remove her from the protection she is under without his permission."

"Did he send that message to me in defiance?" said the baron.

"I have no reason to believe so, your excellency."

The baron was silent for some time; he then inquired of the delegate how many armed retainers the Innominato kept.

"None, I believe," was the reply. "At any rate, there were none to be seen when the deputation from the town visited him."

The baron was again silent for some moments, and seemed deeply absorbed in thought. He would rather have met with any other opponent than the Innominato, whose reputation was well known to him, and whose learning he dreaded more than the power of any nobleman—no matter how many armed retainers he could bring against him.

"I very much suspect," he said at last, "that some deception is being practised on me. But should my suspicion be correct I shall exact terrible vengeance. I shall detain you," he continued, turning abruptly and fiercely on the delegate, "as a hostage while I visit the Innominato; and if I do not succeed with him, you shall die on the same scaffold as the son of your podesta."

It was in vain that the delegate protested against being detained as a prisoner, saying that it was against all rules of knightly usage; but the baron would not listen to reason, and the unfortunate man was immediately hurried out of the hall and imprisoned.

Although the baron by no means liked the idea of an interview with the Innominato, he immediately made preparations to visit him, and the day after the delegate's arrival he set out on his journey, attended by only four of his retainers. It should here be mentioned, that it is more than probable the baron would have avoided meeting the Innominato on any other occasion whatever, so great was the dislike he had to him. He seemed to be acting under some fatality; some power seemed to impel him in his endeavours to obtain Teresa which it was impossible to account for.

The road chosen by the baron to reach the castle of the Innominato was rather a circuitous one. In the first place, he did not consider it prudent to pass through the Valteline; and in the second, he thought that by visiting his brother on his way he might be able to obtain some particulars as to the character of the mysterious individual whom he was about to see, as his reputation would probably be better known among the inhabitants of the Bergamo district than by those in the valley of the Engadin.

The baron arrived safely at his brother's castle, where the reports which had hitherto indistinctly reached him of the wonderful power and skill of the astrologer were fully confirmed. After remaining a day with his brother, the baron started for Lecco. Under an assumed name he stayed here for two days, in order that he might receive the report of one of his men, whom he had sent forward to ascertain whether the Innominato had any armed men in his castle; for, being capable of any act of treachery himself, he naturally suspected treason in others. The man in due time returned, and reported that, although he had taken great pains to find out the truth, he was fully convinced,

that not only were there no soldiers in the castle, but that it did not, to the best of his belief, contain an arm of any kind—the Innominato relying solely on his occult power for his defence.

Perfectly assured that he had no danger to apprehend, the baron left Lecco, attended by his retainers, and in a few hours afterwards he arrived at the Hospice, where his wish for an interview was conveyed to the astrologer. After some delay a reply was sent that the Innominato was willing to receive the baron on condition that he came alone, as his retainers would not be allowed to enter the castle. The baron hesitated for some moments, not liking to place himself in the power of a man who, after all, might prove a very dangerous adversary, and who might even use treacherous means. His love for Teresa Biffi, however, urged him to accept the invitation, and he accompanied the messenger to the castle.

The Innominato received his guest with stern courtesy; and, without even asking him to be seated, requested to know the object of his visit.

"Perhaps I am not altogether unknown to you," said the baron. "I am lord of the Engadin."

"Frankly," said the Innominato, "your name and reputation are both well known to me. It would give me great satisfaction were they less so."

"I regret to hear you speak in that tone," said the baron, evidently making great efforts to repress his rising passion. "A person in my position is not likely to be without enemies, but it rather surprises me to find a man of your reputation so prejudiced against me without having investigated the accusations laid to my charge."

"You judge wrongly if you imagine that I am so," said the Innominato. "But once more, will you tell me the object of your visit?"

"I understood," said the baron, "by a message sent to me by the insolent inhabitants of Bormio, that you know the person with whom a young girl, named Teresa Biffi, is at present residing. Might I ask if that statement is correct?"

"I hardly sent it in those words," said the Innominato. "But admitting it to be so, I must first ask your reason for inquiring."

"I have not the slightest objection to inform you," said the baron. "I have nothing to conceal. I wish to make her my wife."

"On those terms I am willing to assist you," said the astrologer. "But only on the condition that you immediately release the messenger you have most unjustly confined in one of your dungeons, as well as the young son of the podesta, and that you grant them a safe escort back to Bormio; and further, that you promise to cease annoying the people of that district. Do all this, and I am willing to promise you that Teresa Biffi shall not only become your wife, but shall bring with her a dowry and wedding outfit sufficiently magnificent even for the exalted position to which you propose to raise her."

"I solemnly promise you," said the baron, "that the moment the wedding is over, the delegate from Bormio and the son of the podesta shall both leave my castle perfectly free and unhampered with any conditions; and moreover that I will send a strong escort with them to protect them on their road."

"I see you are already meditating treachery," said the Innominato. "But I will not, in any manner, alter my offer. The day week after their safe return to Bormio Teresa Biffi shall arrive at the castle of Gardonal for the wedding ceremony. Now you distinctly know my conditions, and I demand from you an unequivocal acceptance or refusal."

"What security shall I have that the bargain will be kept on your side?" said the baron.

"My word, and no other."

The baron remained silent for a moment, and then said—

"I accept your offer. But clearly understand me in my turn, sir astrologer. Fail to keep your promise, and had you ten times the power you have I will take my revenge on you; and I am not a man to threaten such a thing without doing it."

"All that I am ready to allow," said the Innominato, with great coolness; "that is to say, in case you have the power to carry out your threat, which in the present instance you have not. Do not imagine that because I am not surrounded by a band of armed cut-throats and miscreants I am not the stronger of the two. You little dream how powerless you are in my hands. You see this bird," he continued, taking down a common sparrow in a wooden cage from a nail in the wall on which it hung,— "it is not more helpless in my hands than you are; nay more, I will now give the bird far greater power over you than I possess over it."

As he spoke he unfastened the door of the cage, and the sparrow darted from it through the window into the air, and in a moment afterwards was lost to sight.

"That bird," the astrologer went on to say, "will follow you till I deprive it of the power. I bear you no malice for doubting my veracity. Falsehood is too much a portion of your nature for you to disbelieve its existence in others. I will not seek to punish you for the treachery which I am perfectly sure you will soon be imagining against me without giving you fair warning; for, a traitor yourself, you naturally suspect treason in others. As soon as you entertain a thought of evading your promise to release your prisoners, or conceive any treason or ill feeling against me, that sparrow will appear to you. If you instantly abandon the thought no harm will follow; but if you do not a terrible punishment will soon fall upon you. In whatever position you may find yourself at the moment, the bird will be near you, and no skill of yours will be able to harm it."

The baron now left the Innominato, and returned with his men to Lecco, where he employed himself for the remainder of the day in making preparations for his homeward journey. To return by the circuitous route he had taken in going to Lecco would have occupied too much time, as he was anxious to arrive at his castle, that he might without delay release the prisoners and make preparations for his wedding with Teresa Biffi. To pass the Valteline openly with his retainers—which was by far the shortest road—would have exposed him to too much danger; he therefore resolved to divide his party and send three men back by his brother's castle, so that they could return the horses they had borrowed. Then he would disguise himself and



the fourth man (a German who could not speak a word of Italian, and from whom he had nothing therefore to fear on the score of treachery) as two Tyrolese merchants returning to their own country. He also purchased two mules and some provisions for the journey, so that they need not be obliged to rest in any of the villages they passed through, where possibly they might be detected, and probably maltreated.

Next morning the baron and his servant, together with the two mules, went on board a large bark which was manned by six men, and which he had hired for the occasion, and in it they started for Colico. At the commencement of their voyage they kept along the eastern side of the lake, but after advancing a few miles the wind, which had hitherto been moderate, now became so strong as to cause much fatigue to the rowers, and the captain of the bark determined on crossing the lake, so as to be under the lee of the mountains on the other side. When half way across they came in view of the turrets of the castle of the Innominato. The sight of the castle brought to the baron's mind his interview with its owner, and the defiant manner in which he had been treated by him. The longer he gazed the stronger became his anger against the Innominato, and at last it rose to such a point that he exclaimed aloud, to the great surprise of the men in the boat, "Some day I will meet thee again, thou insolent villain, and I will then take signal vengeance on thee for the insult offered me yesterday."

The words had hardly been uttered when a sparrow, apparently driven from the shore by the wind, settled on the bark for a moment, and then flew away. The baron instantly remembered what the Innominato had said to him, and also the warning the bird was to give. With a sensation closely resembling fear, he tried to change the current of his thoughts, and was on the point of turning his head from the castle, when the rowers in the boat simultaneously set up a loud shout of warning, and the baron then perceived that a heavily-laden vessel, four times the size of his own, and with a huge sail set, was running before the wind with great velocity, threatening the next moment to strike his boat on the beam; in which case both he and the men would undoubtedly be drowned. Fortunately, the captain of the strange bark had heard the cry of the rowers, and by rapidly putting down his helm, saved their lives; though the baron's boat was struck with so much violence on the quarter that she nearly sank.

The Baron Conrad had now received an earnest that the threat of the Innominato was not a vain one, and feeling that he was entirely in his power, resolved if possible not to offend him again. The boat continued on her voyage, and late in the evening arrived safely at Colico, where the baron, with his servant and the mules, disembarked, and without delay proceeded on their journey. They continued on their road till nightfall, when they began to consider how they should pass the night. They looked around them, but they could perceive no habitation or shelter of any kind, and it was now raining heavily. They continued their journey onwards, and had almost come to the conclusion that they should be obliged to pass the night in the open air, when a short distance before them they saw a low cottage, the door of which was open, showing the dim light of a fire burning within. The baron

now determined to ask the owner of the cottage for permission to remain there for the night; but to be certain that no danger could arise, he sent forward his man to discover whether it was a house standing by itself, or one of a village; as in the latter case he would have to use great caution to avoid being detected. His servant accordingly left him to obey orders, and shortly afterwards returned with the news that the house was a solitary one, and that he could not distinguish a trace of any other in the neighbourhood. Satisfied with this information, the baron proceeded to the cottage door, and begged the inmates to afford him shelter for the night, assuring them that the next morning he would remunerate them handsomely. The peasant and his wife—a sickly-looking, emaciated old couple—gladly offered them all the accommodation the wretched cabin could afford. After fastening up the mules at the back of the house, and bringing in the baggage and some dry fodder to form a bed for the baron and his servant, they prepared some of the food their guests had brought with them for supper, and shortly afterwards the baron and his servant were fast asleep.

Next morning they rose early and continued on their journey. After they had been some hours on the road, the baron, who had before been conversing with his retainer, suddenly became silent and absorbed in thought. He rode on a few paces in advance of the man, thinking over the conditions made by the Innominato, when the idea struck him whether it would not be possible in some way to evade them. He had hardly entertained the thought, when the sparrow flew rapidly before his mule's head, and then instantly afterwards his servant, who had ridden up to him, touched him on the shoulder and pointed to a body of eight or ten armed men about a quarter of a mile distant, who were advancing towards them. The baron, fearing lest they might be some of the armed inhabitants of the neighbourhood who were banded together against him, and seeing that no time was to be lost, immediately plunged, with his servant, into a thick copse where, without being seen, he could command a view of the advancing soldiers as they passed. He perceived that when they came near the place where he was concealed they halted, and evidently set about examining the traces of the footsteps of the mules. They communed together for some time as if in doubt what course they should adopt, and finally, the leader giving the order, they continued their march onwards, and the baron shortly afterwards left his place of concealment.

Nothing further worthy of notice occurred that day; and late at night they passed through Bormio, fortunately without being observed. They afterwards arrived safely at the foot of the mountain pass, and at dawn began the ascent. The day was fine and calm, and the sun shone magnificently. The baron, who now calculated that the dangers of his journey were over, was in high spirits, and familiarly conversed with his retainer. When they had reached a considerable elevation, the path narrowed, so that the two could not ride abreast, and the baron went in advance. He now became very silent and thoughtful, all his thoughts being fixed on the approaching wedding, and in speculations as to how short a time it would take for the delegate and the youth to reach Bormio. Suddenly the thought occurred to him, whether

the men whom he should send to escort the hostages back, could not, when they had completed their business, remain concealed in the immediate neighbourhood till after the celebration of the wedding, and then bring back with them some other hostage, and thus enable him to make further demands for compensation for the insult he considered had been offered him. Although the idea had only been vaguely formed, and possibly with but little intention of carrying it out, he had an immediate proof that the power of the astrologer was following him. A sparrow settled on the ground before him, and did not move until his mule was close to it, when it rose in the air right before his face. He continued to follow its course with his eyes, and as it rose higher he thought he perceived a tremulous movement in an immense mass of snow, which had accumulated at the base of one of the mountain peaks. All thought of treachery immediately vanished. He gave a cry of alarm to his servant, and they both hurried onwards, thus barely escaping being buried in an avalanche, which the moment afterwards overwhelmed the path they had crossed.

The baron was now more convinced than ever of the tremendous power of the Innominato, and so great was his fear of him, that he resolved for the future not to contemplate any treachery against him, or entertain any thoughts of revenge.

The day after the baron's arrival at the castle of Gardonal, he ordered the delegate and the podesta's son to be brought into his presence. Assuming a tone of much mildness and courtesy, he told them he much regretted the inconvenience they had been put to, but that the behaviour of the inhabitants of Bormio had left him no alternative. He was ready to admit that the delegate had told him the truth, although from the interview he had with the Innominato, he was by no means certain that the inhabitants of their town had acted in a friendly manner towards him, or were without blame in the matter. Still he did not wish to be harsh, and was willing for the future to be on friendly terms with them if they promised to cease insulting him—what possible affront they could have offered him it would be difficult to say. "At the same time, in justice to myself," he continued (his natural cupidity gaining the ascendant at the moment), "I hardly think I ought to allow you to return without the payment of some fair ransom."

He had scarcely uttered these words when a sparrow flew in at the window, and darting wildly two or three times across the hall, left by the same window through which it had entered. Those present who noticed the bird looked at it with an eye of indifference—but not so the baron. He knew perfectly well that it was a warning from the astrologer, and he looked around him to see what accident might have befallen him had he continued the train of thought. Nothing of an extraordinary nature followed the disappearance of the bird. The baron now changed the conversation, and told his prisoners that they were at liberty to depart as soon as they pleased; and that to prevent any misfortune befalling them on the road, he would send four of his retainers to protect them. In this he kept his promise to the letter, and a few days afterwards the men returned, reporting that the delegate and the son of the podesta had both arrived safely at their destination.

*(To be continued.)*

## RIGHTEOUS WRATH.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

**I** WAS at a party the other night; a young lady was playing what she called an arrangement for the piano, and we were listening with that air of resignation which most of us keep for our friends' performances, an expression that seems to be compounded of two feelings—longing to do better, and a strong inclination to do worse. I don't know much about hydrophobia, but if a tendency to howl during drawing-room music be a decisive symptom, I must have been dog-bitten at some early stage of existence.

To my great relief, Moony came to say that Merton, my brother, was in town, and wanted me. Our hostess is a lady who prizes, that is appraises, all her friends, and Merton of course is to me as a napoleon to a half-franc, so Moony had orders to go and fetch him. Declining on the plea of inability, he at once fell into disgrace; our smiling entertainer stiffened into a woman with a grievance, and dismissed us with a look of outraged propriety that sent him off exclaiming, "Righteous wrath is bad enough, but save me from the wrath of the righteous."

"I suppose all wrath is righteous," I said; "or if it is not, it ought to be. There must be something meritorious in such extremely hard work. I saw a man the other day standing in a heap of dust discoursing to an audience of three costermongers, an old woman, and a baby, because an omnibus conductor had suffered him to be carried some yards past his stopping-place: nothing less than a sense of the public good could have induced a fellow with good gloves on to make such an exhibition of himself. I can understand a man painting for the pleasure of it, or a woman (not a man) singing for the pleasure of it, but scolding for the pleasure of it must have some of the hidden joys of martyrdom."

"Ah, you think so because of your complaint, Jack," said Merton, who was waiting for us in the street.

"What is that?" I asked, wondering whether he detected any symptoms of heart disease; everybody dies of heart disease in these days, you know.

"Vacuum in the brain," he answered.

Merton is not much given to the use of periphrasis, I will say that for him; he declares that it spoils an uncivil thing to say it civilly.

"Not much chance of vacuum," said Moony; "we take in all the magazines, and have to keep the thread of fifteen continuous stories in our heads. I dreamt the other night that the Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly had come to live in Guild Court, where old Sir Douglas managed Grace's Fortune, while Robert Falconer had settled at Stone Edge to study the Last Chronicle of Barsel."

"You did not dream originality," said Merton; "that sort of thing has been done lots of times."

These country men have a terrible scent for an old fox, but Moony, undaunted, replied, "My dear fellow, is there anything that has not been

done? I had a capital idea last week—evolved it, so I thought, out of my own inner consciousness, and found it next day in the Book of Maccabees."

"Better get up the question of waste wrath," suggested Merton; "there are other things besides coal that we may find ourselves short of some day, and there is enough righteous choler spent annually to make steam for several generations."

"If you want to see indignation, look at Walker's 'Parting Lovers' in the Academy," said Moony: "the passion in the girl's throat is something real; not a soul finds it out; people just gape at it."

"It is a fine study of character to hear the comments there."

"Character!" Moony exploded. "I saw two women dressed like ladies stop before a picture that would do for a poet's dream if it had not been hung on the principle of Jack Ketch: one of these gentle critics observed to the other, with a hateful snigger, 'Ophelia, poor thing! ain't you sorry for her? Who would buy it, I wonder.' You might walk miles in a French gallery and never hear a remark of that sort, I mean from the natives; talk about English refinement! one half the time it isn't common decency!"

"I did not know you were in the raging line yourself," said Merton, with an absurd air of apology.

"Moony's wrath always ends in smoke," I put in, as he brought out a disreputable Swiss pipe, to which he is ostentatiously faithful.

These two are always coming into collision, and making me serve as a buffer, like those the railway-carriages have. I asked Merton now to give us some forms of waste wrath.

"All class hatreds, to begin with," he said. "Invite a duke to dinner, and see if you can get one of your friends to treat him with civility, that is if he is young and good-looking; of course it is only the natural reaction from past snobbishness, but it may be carried too far."

"There certainly is a fine crop of weak-minded peers in this generation," said Moony.

"Only the law of markets. The public demands ludicrous men and it gets them, just as it demands writing women and gets them."

"Nobody wants blues," I suggested.

"That is another class hatred. A large-patterned woman will have special defects, but she has balancing advantages. I never knew one who was either mean, false, or selfish; they are generally vain, poor souls! but that is only Nature's compensation, or else distorted womanhood, like the cat and canary petting. Lawyers, again, have been cruelly slandered as universally clever; most of us have known lawyers of a mild and gentle, not to say sheepish, turn of mind, who would have been better at least for their clients had they possessed a little more cunning and skill. I looked in at one of the Westminster courts this morning. Some case of ship-insurance was going on. The pleader who had the best argument was so overpowered by it that he grinned and giggled like an idiot, while the other sat by pale as death, as young ladies say; as for the judges, a more laboriously puzzle-brained set of old women never shook their heads together. I suppose any man over sixty dressed as a dowager would look like one; but if they had been so diabolically keen it must surely have shown itself somewhere."



"It is the novelists have made up the notion," said Moony. "They must have a schemer, you know; it's one of the stock properties."

"Novels, like newspapers, only succeed so far as they utter the popular thought; still they have a good deal to answer for. Even George Eliot gives us no honester specimen than Lawyer Wakem; only there is this always in his characters, that we can believe them to be exceptional while we feel them to be real."

"Got any more types?" I asked, as he stopped for breath.

"Heaps. Take successful men; why should everybody snarl at them, openly or secretly? Of course there is the success of Tupper and the "Times" newspaper; nevertheless I do believe that in general if a man succeeds it is for some good reason; if he gets ahead of his fellows it is because he has worked harder or faster; more often than not because some tragedy in the background has spurred him on so to work."

"You are getting awfully young, Merton," I said.

"Young!" he exclaimed.

"Young or old—I don't know which it is, only you don't sound like a contemporary, somehow. You can't think what a queer feeling it gives one to hear a man mean what he says; something like speech must have sounded to those children in the ethnological fables who were brought up by dumb nurses on desert islands; it seems a thing one ought to understand, or might have understood in some far-off time."

"You are going to ruin, Jack."

"There and back—excursion. I've secured a compartment to myself, that is one comfort."

I never contradict Merton; he's the elder, you know, and used to punch my head if I did; but it is certainly a bulwark of the British constitution that compels the head of the family to take the estate and in general to live there. Six months in Shropshire would kill me; and Merton in London would, in his own phrase, make something of me.

I don't want to be made something of. Mutton may be infinitely more respectable than sheep, but if ever the suffrage gets down to that depth, I fancy the lambs would vote for unimprovement.



# MY LOVE AND I.

**WE** never spoke a word of love,  
 We never named its name,  
 As through the leafy wood, and down  
 The shadowed path we came;  
 And yet—and yet—I almost think,  
 Although I can't tell why,  
 His love is mine, and mine is his;  
 We're ours—my love and I.

Here let me sit, and live in thought  
 Those blissful hours again,  
 And ere I hoard them in my heart  
 Their sap and sweetness drain.  
 The bluebells hung their fair young heads  
 Beneath the bluer sky,  
 We talked of trivial, common things,  
 We talked—my love and I.

And once—how well I know the spot—  
 We stopped beside the brook,  
 And saw the gurgling waters, as  
 Their sunlit way they took.  
 My eyes met his, the soul of love  
 In that brief glance did lie,  
 My eyelids drooped—we watched the stream  
 Flow past—my love and I.

And now, I've nothing more to say,  
 My heart won't let me tell  
 The silent talk our spirits had,  
 The charm that o'er us fell.  
 I am not sure, but still I think,  
 Although I can't tell why,  
 His love is mine, and mine is his;  
 We're ours—my love and I.

## BELGIANS AT HOME.

By the Rev. H. T. ARMFIELD, M.A., Editor of Murray's "Handbook for Belgium."

TO an Englishman who sees the Belgians in their own country, and observes the current opinion amongst them, one thing becomes speedily apparent. He finds that he is not separated from them by those marked diversities of temperament, or by that entire divergence of view upon the most fundamental interests of life, which he feels to be fatal to all prospect of his fraternising to any serious extent with some other nations of the Continent. On the contrary, he finds that the Belgian has much in common with himself. He has the same conceptions of freedom, both individual and social; he lives under a government similarly constituted to our own; and he has institutions based upon those same principles that lie deepest in the heart of this country.

The Constitution of Belgium is laid down in one hundred and thirty-nine articles, and bears the very recent date of 1831, having of course been drawn up subsequent to its separation from Holland. As amongst ourselves, the legislative power is vested in three separate estates of the realm—the King, the Senate, and the Chamber of Representatives. But there is this important difference between us—that neither of their two houses is hereditary, like our house of peers. The Senate appears to be the more dignified assembly of the two, consisting of only half as many members as the other. But the Senators, like the members of the lower house, are elected by the people for a period of eight years, the Deputies of the other chamber holding their seats for four years only. The qualifications for holding a seat in either house differ only in degree, and not in kind from each other. The Senator must be at least forty years of age, while the Deputy need not be more than twenty-five; and the Senator must be a man who pays at the least one thousand florins in direct taxation, a smaller sum being required of a member of the lower house. Upon the question which sometimes gets debated amongst ourselves, whether members of parliament ought to be paid or not for the admitted services they render, the Belgians appear to be of a different opinion from that which obtains here. For it is provided that every Deputy of the lower house shall receive an indemnity of two hundred florins a month throughout the whole duration of the session; but it is thought unnecessary to extend the same allowance to the more wealthy gentlemen who sit in the upper house.

In the very first Articles of the Constitution, immediately after the definition of the territory and the subdivision of it into nine provinces or counties, we have the Belgium ideas of freedom laid down; and they are in remarkable accordance with our own. In the state there is no distinction of rank, but all men are equal in the sight of the law. Individual liberty is guaranteed; that is to say, no one can be arrested at the caprice of a minister, or by the despotic order of the sovereign. It can only be done, as in England, by virtue of an order of a judge; and a prosecution can only be instituted

in the cases for which the law provides, in the forms which the law defines, and before that particular judge which the law appoints for the accused. Like other governments, the Belgian government of course has its opponents, and formidable ones too; but it cannot get rid of them by the summary procedure of an arrest without warrant, a hole-and-corner trial, and an imprisonment *sine die*, all hustled through in the course of a few hours. Belgium, indeed, is full of memories of such things in the past. She will never forget the deeds of blood perpetrated upon her soil under the name of Religion, but really in the interests of Politics, in the time of Alva and the Inquisition; and it seems almost in revenge for being saddled with such traditions as these that she has now hedged round the personal freedom of the individual with every conceivable safeguard, and from the very beginning of her present constitution has wiped out the penalty of death from her civil code, decreeing that it shall never be re-established.

Freedom, indeed, seems to be the word which has set the key of this Constitution of 1831. The press is free; editors may write what they like. Education is free; people may teach what they like. And religion is free; you may hold what opinions you like. Not, however, that the State is so unpaternal as to take no interest in these things at all. On the contrary, she recognizes both education and religion as indispensable instruments for promoting the welfare of the people; and accordingly she pays largely for both. Only she does not apply restrictive measures to any manifestation of either of them. In her eyes all forms of religious opinion are equal. Thus there is no form of established religion, but on the other hand, a large sum is paid annually out of the public treasury towards the maintenance of the ministers of religion. On the same principle the Government pays handsomely towards education, and professes an earnest wish that every single subject should receive at least the elements of knowledge. Accordingly, besides many special schools for agriculture, navigation, and professional knowledge of various kinds, the Government supports the two important universities of Ghent and Liège; while they have normal schools for training their teachers, middle schools, and primary schools for children between seven and fourteen years of age, the children below seven years old being both nursed and taught in institutions, for which they have invented a name—*La Crèche*—as full of poetry as the work done by them is full of practical utility. The evil of having large masses of population growing up without even the most rudimentary education has been felt amongst them no less acutely than amongst ourselves. The Belgians have shrunk, however, from adopting a system of compulsory education; but they have attempted to reach the end aimed at by removing the excuse of poverty for a neglected education. Their law provides that the children of the poor shall receive instruction gratuitously. It is fair, however, to add that their official documents lament that even with this liberal temptation the poor remain uneducated in very considerable numbers. In such a system of education the question must necessarily arise, What form of religious teaching is to be adopted? Their law solves it by deciding that the religious and moral instruction of each school shall be given under the direction of the ministers of that particular creed which is pro-

fessed by the majority of the pupils at the school, the minority being protected by an exemption from undergoing that instruction.

There are, perhaps, few subjects connected with the Belgians upon which there is greater inexactness of statement with people who have not been amongst them than upon the language of the country. You hear it commonly said that Flemish is the indigenous language of the country, but that the upper classes speak French. Now, in the first place, this statement does not quite represent the fact; and, in the second, people who adopt it have not in general any very distinct idea of what they mean by "Flemish." The truth is that Belgium has two indigenous languages. Speaking roughly, if you draw a line across the map from about Lille to Liège, the indigenous language south of the line is Wallon, an old form of French, but one which you cannot understand although you may understand French; and north of the line the indigenous language is what they very properly call, not Flemish, but *Le Néerlandais*—Netherlandish. I say they very properly call it by this name, because it is the same language, with only dialectic differences, as that spoken in Holland, which we ordinarily call Dutch. This Netherlandish is a form of German, and deserves an Englishman's notice especially because it forms a stepping-stone half way between the modern High German and his own speech. For instance, *sieben* in German becomes *zeven* in Netherlandish and *seven* in English; the German *mittel* becomes successively *middel* and *middle*; the *buch* of the German is *boek* and *book*; *tag* is *dag* and *day*. Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. Every Belgian, then, has one or other of these two—either the Wallon or the Netherlandish—as his native language. And beyond this almost every Belgian of education, whether in the north or the south, speaks French. Indeed, in Brussels itself French seems to be the ordinary language adopted in the better classes of society; and, though the Constitution distinctly forbids the establishment by law of any particular language as the vernacular, French is practically the language of the Government. Further north, French does not appear to have obtained quite the same footing among the more cultivated sections of the people. I once was present in the north at a meeting of a committee consisting of one of their leading ecclesiastics, a most eminent artist, and a well-known man of letters, and I was surprised to find that they conducted their business in Netherlandish. On my remarking the circumstance to the last-named of the three, and saying that I expected that polished men would have conversed together in French, he replied that it was to them a matter of perfect indifference; sometimes they adopted one language and sometimes the other.

Foremost among the home usages of a nation is, perhaps, their practice with respect to marriage: and herein the Belgians have a mode of procedure quite different from our own. The wedding couple, with their friends and relatives, make a formal appearance before the mayor or his representative, and there the necessary pledges are exchanged, the contracts are made, and the contracting parties are declared to be man and wife. This completed, a general adjournment of the whole party takes place to the church, where the nuptial benediction is pronounced upon the newly-married couple. Arising out of this



custom, most town-halls in Belgium contain a room—called the *Salle des Mariages*—set apart for this department of the functions of the mayor. In some of the larger towns the *Salle des Mariages* is decorated with works of art of the highest value: that at Brussels, for example, is hung with most magnificent and costly Tournay tapestries; and the room at Antwerp is remarkable for its large carved 'chimney-piece representing the Marriage in Cana of Galilee.

Few things are more conspicuous amongst the Belgians than the encouragement they give to the fine arts. Go where you will amongst them, you find architecture, painting, sculpture, and music. The town-halls and guildhalls of the Belgian cities are known by reputation, even to those who have not seen them, as being some of the finest specimens of ancient Gothic architecture in the world. Without undertaking to say that it is the finest of them, the most extraordinary of them all is perhaps the hall at Louvain—the Burton-on-Trent of Belgium, which brews, by the way, quite as much, though I am bound to say, not quite as good, beer as they do in our own mid-country breweries. This town-hall is quite a miracle of stonework. It is one mass of carving of the most delicate character, so that it looks almost like a network of stone. The effect of it was well described in a few words with which a Belgian gentleman finished his praises of it to me in the train to Louvain. He had said everything he could think of in praise of it, and then shrugged his shoulders with this final exclamation, "Ah, Monsieur, c'est une affaire de dentelle!" And so, indeed, I found it; it realized the idea of lace made in stone more than anything I have seen elsewhere.

There is in particular one result of a few weeks' ramble amongst these old Belgian buildings, which many an Englishman will experience; and it is this—he will be likely to find his opinions about architecture revolutionised by his visit. An impression has been very widely cherished in this country throughout the present century, that pointed, or as it is commonly called, Gothic architecture, is fit only for churches, country parsonages, and schools, being very ill-adapted to the purposes of domestic life or civil business. The very best answer to such an impression is to go and see the architecture of the Belgians. Amongst them you find, it is true, splendid Gothic cathedrals, Gothic churches, and Gothic schools; but you find also Gothic dwelling-houses, Gothic warehouses, Gothic exchanges, Gothic halls, Gothic market-houses, Gothic cranes, Gothic pump-handles, Gothic everything; and you learn, perhaps to your astonishment, that these principles of Gothic art, which you have thought hitherto applicable only to ecclesiastical purposes, will adapt themselves with remarkable flexibility to every single purpose of life that you can take in hand: and, prejudiced as you may have been, you will almost involuntarily admit that they are instinct with a glory and a power which all the precisianism of eighteenth-century pseudo-classical architecture in your own country has utterly failed to impart, even to the most pretentious monuments of the style.

Everybody knows that the Belgians have been always enthusiastic patrons of painting. But about one of their greatest painters, Van Dyk, I believe

most Englishmen who have not seen him upon his native soil have only a very incomplete idea. Ask any untraveller man of your acquaintance who Van Dyk was, and it is a wonder if you do not get as a reply, that he was a famous painter of portraits. During his residence in this country he did paint chiefly portraits, for, whomsoever he took in hand, he had that invaluable faculty of always making his sitters look like ladies and gentlemen upon his canvas. And it is no wonder that all the fine people about the Court, finding they had so good a painter amongst them, instantly wanted their portraits taken, and left him time to paint nothing else. But see Van Dyk at home, in the galleries and churches of Antwerp, for instance, and this view of him immediately disappears. He stands out there at once in his true character as a painter of the greatest subjects of history and religion, his power as a portrait painter being almost entirely subordinate to this. The hopeless desolation and suffering of his "Christ on the Cross," in the Musée at Antwerp, is such an illustration of the beginning of the twenty-second Psalm as, when once seen, is not easily forgotten; and the memory of only one such picture is quite enough to make you hesitate in adopting the current English impression, that Van Dyk was solely, or even chiefly, a painter of portraits.

The present school of painters among the Belgians seems likely to maintain the old prestige of the country in this art. It will be remembered that at the Exhibition of 1862, in London, some of the modern Belgian pictures attracted perhaps more public admiration than any other pictures in the modern gallery. Most visitors will remember, for example, the crowds that were always gathered round Gallait's fine picture of "The Last Moments of Counts Egmont and Hoorn;" and many will retain to this day the awe-struck impression conveyed to the mind by the large picture which, though critics might have found some faults of execution, was certainly as magnificent as it was original in conception, of Judas suddenly and unsuspectingly coming upon the two men engaged in making the Cross, wherein the traitor seems to have the enormity of his crime fully presented to his mind by the sight of this trivial piece of mechanical detail necessary to consummate it. Another branch of the art, too—that of fresco painting—the Belgians are practising with eminent success. One of their greatest artists, Baron Leys, is at this moment engaged upon a series of historical frescoes in the Hôtel de Ville at Antwerp, which but few Englishmen have been admitted to see in their incomplete state, but which promise to be so fine, that hereafter enthusiasts for pictures will be found making pilgrimages to Antwerp on purpose to see these splendid creations of the painter's art.

I said, everybody knows that the Belgians are zealous patrons of the pictorial art, but I admit that I was not a little surprised to find how universally, and how successfully, too, they cultivate the art of the musician. They have music everywhere. Societies for part-singing, as well as for instrumental performance, exist in almost every village. I was once dining with a wealthy landed proprietor in the neighbourhood of a little country town in Belgium, of about one thousand inhabitants, and, talking of this subject, he told me that out of the inhabitants of that very town and the surrounding villages, they maintained a band of eighty-four players. Later in the evening we went down

to the rehearsal-room, and found upwards of fifty of them actually practising together. I do not say that the performance was of the highest order of excellence, but it was very tolerable; and I could not help contrasting this assemblage of country instrumentalists with what one would find in an English country town of the same size, where a brass band of about eight would represent all the musical resources of the place, and would be thought very fairly to sustain its reputation as a locality having some appreciation of the art. But at Antwerp I found a body of amateur musicians in an advanced stage of discipline as executants. There is a very large club there, called the *Société du Cercle Artistique*, which is not the most fashionable and select club there, but embraces men of letters and talent of all sorts; and, besides the usual attributes of a London club, is established for the purpose of encouraging the fine arts. Amongst other ways of giving this encouragement, the *Société* maintains an orchestra, complete in every department, from amongst its own members. I was assured that every single instrument (and not one was absent) was played by an amateur; and, building upon one's English experience, this assurance prepared me for a somewhat indifferent performance. However, as I entered their concert-room, I heard them playing Weber's "Jubilee Overture," with a dash and refinement which at once made me reflect that, if amateur Belgians could do that, then Belgium must be a very musical country. And so, in truth, it is. Wisely, too, the Government undertakes to cultivate and foster this national inclination. It takes the study of the art under its especial patronage, by the establishment and maintenance of two important schools in the Conservatoires of Brussels and Liège, where there is opportunity for receiving instruction in every branch, under professors who are paid by the Government.

There is, of course, very much more to be said about the national life of the Belgians than all I have been able to set down here. But I think I have said enough to convey the very just impression that the Belgians are a people quite in the van of European civilisation. Their free monarchical government, the aggregate of their conceptions of liberty, their unfettered public opinion, their enlightened views of social policy, their culture of the more refined side of modern life in their successful patronage of the fine arts—these are criteria of an advanced civilisation, and all of them points on which they find a ready sympathy in the heart of England; and for the sake of these we could not help being proud to welcome them here, even if we did not recollect that their affability to strangers, their unfeigned courtesy, their quiet *politesse*, have so generally the effect of rendering an Englishman's residence in their country both humanizing and agreeable.



## A TRADITION IN OUR FAMILY.

**I**N those good old times when men were hanged for everything or anything, a rogue was duly executed at Tyburn. It was soon over. The drop fell—a strong convulsion shook him for a minute—the soul was launched into eternity; for an hour the body swung on the gibbet, and then was cut down and handed over to the faculty for dissection.

Body-snatching was a lucrative profession in those days. Whether Jack Ketch acquired vested rights in the subjects he manipulated, and entered the market in competition with resurrection men, or whether the sheriff determined what school or what individual should profit by the remains of those who had been unprofitable to society, the learned in laws, manners, and customs may tell. "The faculty" in this instance was a then celebrated lecturer whose researches needed supplies of the kind. A shell was procured and the corpse conveyed to the surgeon's dissecting-room.

It was summer, and very sultry. Mr. Danvers set a high value on a subject procured in perfect health and in the vigour of manhood, so he took care to be in the way when it arrived. He placed it in a current of air and resorted to the usual means of preservation. Nothing brings on a more abnormal state of feeling than great intimacy with death. Mr. Danvers was by no means a callous man, yet to the broken hearts left behind, or the spirit in its first hour's experience of another world, he gave not a single thought.

Other matters pressed on him. He had to dress in haste for a professional dinner. In ten minutes he was in his carriage, turning over what he would say when his health was drank, what he should do with a patient in most critical condition, and whether Dr. Browne would be at the dinner. And then the ordinary routine of a feast in the last century chased away everything of shop. The wine flowed freely, and only when leaving the room after midnight was he brought back to his work-a-day occupations by a word from Dr. Browne, who had been vainly trying to find opportunity all the evening.

"Mr. Danvers," he said, as both were leaving, "I hear you have got Frank Burton's body."

"Oh, yes," Mr. Danvers answered; "what about it?"

"Why, that I wanted it, and you were beforehand with me. You were present when I read my paper on 'Death by Strangulation,' and I wish you would let me be with you when you examine the thorax and vertebræ. I saw the man hanged, and feel certain that his death was caused solely by the dislocation of the spine. There was no asphyxia in the case. I think you will find every point made out in the demonstration.

"I am so glad you mentioned it," Mr. Danvers replied. "I am not going into the question at all. But if you can come early to-morrow morning you shall examine for yourself, and I will look on. No one knows so much on this matter as you do."

"Oh, nonsense; I only want you to be convinced; seven o'clock? Good night."

Mr. Danvers thought over his engagements as he went home. If he should be called away next morning, some of the appliances which would be wanted might not be at hand. He resolved to go at once and arrange everything for the morning before he went to bed, and so sleep till the last minute.

He unlocked the door of his operating-room. To vulgar eyes a chamber of horror—in his simply a repertory full of scientific interest.

In his easy-chair at his table, motionless, but glaring with fixed eyes into space, sat a naked man.

The surgeon's strong nerves were shaken for a moment. There was the empty shell; all the story told itself. Nothing was disturbed or thrown down. The reanimated corpse must, from the state of the apartment, have risen up almost unconsciously, and instinctively found a safe and comfortable seat. There it sat, the ideal of death in life. Mr. D. put down his candle, and gazed bewildered on the wondrous spectacle.

He held the candle to his subject's eyes. The brain was stimulated, and utterance came in gushes—"spare me—no, not yet—not ready—don't—pray don't—perhaps it may come—not yet." The thread of existence was taken up just where it had snapped off. The prison, the jailor, the hangman, all were present, and, with all, the man pleaded for delay.

Mr. Danvers had no such veneration for the laws of this realm as to make him grudge them the escape of a victim. He did not even think of the personal inconvenience this incident would cause him when Dr. Browne should come at seven that morning, nor the disappointment of his own class at two. Some small vivisections he was greatly tempted to, and to one the temptation was irresistible. He did what in his day perhaps every professional man in the kingdom would have done. He tied up his arm and bled him, and as the life-stream ebbed away, it soon appeared that neither the anatomist nor the class of students would be disappointed.

Nevertheless nature rallied. Stimulants undid some of the work of phlebotomy. In time the man came round, and before day dawned was fully aware of his position.

Hour after hour passed in that strange chamber with that very Frankensteinish inmate. Mr. Danvers supplied him with food and wine, cautiously stolen from his own larder and cellar; laid him on some sofa-cushions on the floor of the dissecting-room; impressed upon him the absolute necessity of silence and rest, and locking him in, retired to his own bed and tried to sleep.

Seven o'clock brought Dr. Browne. Mr. Danvers had ordered him to be shown into his consulting-room, and there he detailed to him the strange story of the preceding night, not omitting to observe that in this case at least there could have been no dislocation of the vertebræ.

Dr. Browne did not enter on that question, but asked—"And now, what will you do with him?"

"There's just the difficulty," replied his friend. "I have solemnly promised him protection, and you have been taken into my confidence. I neither know how to keep him nor how to get rid of him. My class comes at two. They know what to expect, and how to escape detection I really do not see. Then



the man is quite unfit to remove in any way in which removal would not betray him and us."

A thought occurred to Dr. B., which he did not at the time communicate. "I am not sure of my plan," he said, "but I think I may be able to help you, and you shall see or hear from me by nine, or ten, at the farthest." So speaking, he hurried off.

He had some idea of the whereabouts of all that remained of a victim of heart disease, and was successful in procuring it, and bringing it to his own laboratory. He then hastened back with an unsuspecting supply of food, to Mr. Danvers, and unfolded his project.

"As every one knows I am interested in cases of this kind, no one will be surprised at hearing that I have been beforehand with you and disappointed you of your subject. You say you thought you had made sure of Frank Burton's body, but that I have got it, and finding you had promised to lecture on it, asked you to give your lecture in my rooms. I will take care there shall be no identification of features, and the neck shall be effectively dealt with to prevent it from telling tales; but the strength of the case will be this: the subject died very suddenly from a slight accident, and I have no doubt you will find when you come to examine him, either aneurism of the aorta, or some form of valvular disease which will fully account for sudden death. You will readily divert attention from any questionable circumstance by discovering that the shock of the execution on the nerves was quite enough to destroy such a life, and probably did so at the moment when he reached the crisis of his fate. In fact, that though hanged, he died of fright. You can send to some of your students, notifying your change of appointment, and for the few you cannot get at, have a hackney-coach waiting at your place to bring them to mine.

It is needless to say the offer was accepted, or to dwell on the astonishment of the pupils, or the effrontery of the teacher. Suffice it to say, the lecture went off perfectly. Great was the surprise of the young men to find such abnormal conditions in a man who had not shown mortal symptoms on the scaffold; some wonder that he looked so much bigger a man in his public appearance. Not one suspected himself to be the dupe of a pious fraud.

The lecture ended, but the difficulties were only beginning. The man was not fit to move, the room could only be closed from all persons and kept locked for a short time without giving an alarm; and to turn him adrift with the great discolouration and abrasion on his neck would have infallibly got him into trouble. Mr. Danvers was no lawyer, and neither felt sure that his Frankenstein, if caught, would not be hanged again; nor what was his own share of criminality in harbouring a man in his position. However, whatever it might be, he resolved to incur it.

The patient was recovering rapidly, and of course Mr. Danvers had much conversation with him. The man had been a butler, and convicted of a plate-robbery under most suspicious circumstances. He protested his innocence to the last moment, but he had been in charge of the plate, worth some hundred pounds. He had left the house for an hour, and from that time no trace had been discovered of it except some loose spoons in a suspicious place,

which were readily identified, bearing the family crest, and which he affirmed were among those in daily use left out when he left the pantry. A fellow-servant saw him carrying a bag that seemed heavy, and before he returned, the cook, being short of pepper, went to the castors for some, and found the plate-cupboard cleared quite out. It was immediately assumed that Mr. Burton had taken final leave of the premises, the hue and cry was raised after him, and great was the surprise of every one when he walked in as if nothing had happened.

The thief-takers, however, were not to be misled by such a dodge as that. Frank Burton was carried off to prison, and though he had borne a good character, the case looked very badly.

By his own account he had gone home to his wife, as he often did in the hour after dinner, and admitted having carried her some delicacy from the dining-table, which the cook looked on as more properly her perquisite. He admitted he had left the plate loose, as he had often done before, but denied earnestly any knowledge of the manner in which it had disappeared. This link, however, was supplied; men came with a search-warrant to the house where his family lived, and there found part of the missing spoons. The wife was unable to account for them. She was certain her husband had never put them where they were found.

The only suggestion his counsel could make was not accepted by the jury. Ill news travels fast. As soon as the row with the butler began, a fellow-servant ran round to his wife and communicated very full particulars of the charge against her husband. The poor woman hastened distracted to the house, where she found her husband in handcuffs. This interval, the counsel said, might have been employed by the thief in divesting suspicion from himself to the hapless butler. The latter had no doubt at all that the groom who conveyed the news to his wife was the thief, and that his visit was entirely designed to enable him to conceal some of the plate where it would certainly be found. Burton had not any doubt upon this matter. He believed himself the victim of this man's infamous conduct.

And what is more, he completely brought his two preservers to view the matter in the same light.

The first step they took was to shave his head and provide him with a wig. A livery finished the transmutation, and Dr. Browne engaged him as house-servant until some escape could be contrived for him.

Whatever his former conduct may have been, he was an excellent servant in his new place. So much so that the family became much attached to him. Ever to clear his character, or see his home and wife and children again, seemed hopeless. Even to inform them that he lived was dangerous. He submitted to every restraint his friends judged needful for his safety without a murmur, but with how much suffering and anxiety only the heart that knoweth its own bitterness could tell.

Eighteen months had now passed and the man-servant had never been sent out nor wished to go. Plans for sending him out of the country had been formed but never carried out. Burton had become reconciled to some extent with the exigencies of his position, and if his fellow-servants thought

him low-spirited and eccentric, that was all. They could not make out where he had lived, nor whether he was or intended to be married, a subject in which the housemaid showed much interest. And why did he never leave the house? Meanwhile, having been so long safe, he relaxed his precautions. He let the servants laugh him out of his wig as if it were merely apeing his betters, and one evening, when something was urgently wanted for special use, he went out to procure it at a neighbouring shop.

Half-an-hour passed and he did not return. An hour—and Dr. Browne grew anxious or impatient. At last he rushed down the area rails struggling for breath, and beaten as a hart before the hunters; and after a rest, too short to recover himself, went up to Dr. Browne's room.

As soon as he could speak he told this story. He had just turned the corner when he was addressed by name, and though he had the presence of mind not to answer, his questioner repeated the name. He denied it, but he knew the voice, which now added—"I saw you hanged long ago." It was no other than the groom who had given evidence at his trial, and to whom he imputed the robbery which had brought himself to the scaffold.

Of course he bolted at once. Probably not pursued, but he ran and doubled through the mazes that then existed near Hatton Garden, and only made his way home when he believed he had baffled pursuit. Still he returned convinced that England could be no place for him any longer, and conjured Dr. Browne to contrive for him to leave the country.

It was at this juncture that the narrator, from whom the writer heard the principal statements of this story, was taken into confidence, and often told in his old age his night's adventure with the man that had been hanged.

The Doctor came to his house, told him the main facts of this narrative, and begged him to try whether he could not get the man off that very night. He heard of a ship that was likely to suit his purpose; it had dropped down the river with the last tide and would sail with the next. Side by side with a felon, and facing a single waterman, with a single portmanteau but sufficient money, he floated down the stream to Gravesend, and only quitted his charge when sail was set and the ship was under weigh, for somewhere or other whence people seldom come back, and where they meet no informers.

V. E.

## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

## PART III.—HIS MANHOOD.

## CHAPTER I.

## IN THE DESERT.

A WORLD lay behind Robert Falconer, and a world lay before him. The world behind him was in its grave. He had covered it over, and turned away. But he knew it would rise at night.

The world before him was not yet born. He did not want it to be born. What might issue from that ghastly fog lying dull and moveless on the horizon of life he did not care. Thither the tide ever setting eastward would carry him, and his future would be born. Let it come. All he cared for now was to leave the empty garments of his dead behind him, the sky and the fields, the houses and the gardens which those dead had made alive with their presence. Travel, motion, ever on, ever away, was the sole impulse in his heart. Nor had even the thought of finding his father any share in this restlessness.

He told his grandmother only that he was going back to Aberdeen. She looked in his face with surprise, but seeing the trouble there, respected its retirement; and asked him no questions. As if walking in a dream, he found himself at Dr. Anderson's door.

"Why, Robert," said the good man, "what has brought you back? Ah! I see. Poor Ericson! I am very sorry, my boy. What can I do for you?"

"I can't go on with my studies just now, sir," answered Robert. "I have taken a great longing for travel. Will you give me some money and let me go?"

"To be sure I will. Where do you want to go?"

"I don't know yet. I want to go. Perhaps as I go I shall find myself wanting to go somewhere. You're not afraid to trust me, are you, sir?"

"Not a bit, Robert. I will trust you with all my heart. You shall do just as you please.—I don't suppose you have any idea how much money you will want?"

"More than I should like to ask for all at once. But I won't waste it."

"Don't be too saving either. Enjoy yourself as well as you can."

Robert gave a strange smile at the idea of enjoying himself. His friend saw it, but let it pass. He did not see any good in persuading a man whose grief seemed to be all that he had left, that he would ere long lose that too. And had it been possible for him to say so, and for Robert to believe it, it would have been but to teach him that then first had he reached the true depths of despair. Robert might rise above his grief, or he might learn to contain his grief; but lose it, forget it?—never.

He went to take his farewell of Shargar. The poor fellow seemed as if he would break his heart.

"Tak' me wi' ye, Robert," he said. "Ye're a gentleman noo. I'll be yer man. I'll put on a livery coat, an' gang wi' ye. I'll awa' to Dr. Anderson an' see gin he winna lat me gang."

"No, Shargar," said Robert, "I can't have you with me. I've come into trouble, Shargar, and I must fight it out alone."

"Ay, ay; I ken. Puir Mr. Ericson!"

"None o' that, Shargar. There's nothing the matter with Mr. Ericson."

"And am I never to see ye again, Robert?"

"I don't know. You stick to your work and perhaps we may meet some day."

"*Perhaps* is nae muckle to say, Robert," protested Shargar.

"It's more than can be said about everything, Shargar," returned Robert, sadly.

"Weel, I maun jist tak' it as 't comes," said Shargar, with a philosophy derived from the days when his mother used to thrash him. "But 'eh! Robert, gin it had only pleased the Almichty to sen' me into the warl' in a some respectable kin' o' a fashion!"

"Wi' a chance a' gaein' aboot the country like that curst villain yer brither, I suppose," retorted Robert, rousing himself for a moment.

"Na, na," responded Shargar. "I'll stick to my ain mither. *She* never learned me sic tricks."

"Do ye that. Ye canna compleen o' God. It's a' richt as far 's ye're concerned. Maybe he'll mak' something o' ye yet."

Shargar walked with him to Dr. Anderson's, and spent the night there. The next morning Robert got on the coach for Edinburgh, liberally provided by Dr. Anderson.

I cannot, if I would, follow Robert on his travels. Only at times, when the conversation rose in the dead of night by some Jacob's ladder of blessed ascent into regions where the heart of such a man could open as in its own natural clime, would the clouds that enveloped this period of his history dispart, a few magical words opening a peep into the phantasm of his past.

I suspect, however, that it was some time before the scenes he went through began to leave upon his mind recallable impressions. I suspect that a great part of this period looked to himself in the retrospect like a painful dream, in which only certain objects and occurrences stood prominently enough to be clear of the moonlight mist that enwrapped the rest. What the exact nature of his misery was I shall not therefore attempt to conjecture. It would be to intrude within the holy place of a human heart. One thing only I will venture to affirm—that bitterness against either of his friends, whose souls had rushed together and left his outside, had no place in that noble nature. If such a feeling ever showed itself to his consciousness, he did not make it his own by one movement of will consenting to its presence. His fate lay behind him, like the birth of Shargar, like the death of Ericson, a decree.

I do not even know in what direction he first went. That he saw many



cities and various countries was clear from the glimpses of ancient streets, of mountain-marvels, of strange constellations, of things in heaven and earth that no one seemed to have observed but himself, floating past on the stream of his talk. A silent man in company, he talked much when his hour of speech arrived. Seldom did he narrate any mere incident, however, for narrative's sake; it almost always appeared in connection with or illustration of some truth or fact of human or world nature.

The first source whence he began anew to draw conscious pleasure was the climbing of church spires. The first thing he did on reaching any new place was always to visit the church—if there were more than one, then the church with the loftiest spire. He never looked into the church till he had left the earth behind him as far as that church would afford him the possibility of ascent. Breathing the air of its highest region, he found himself vaguely strengthened, yes comforted. He had a peculiar feeling, into which I could enter but upon happy occasion, of the presence of God in the wind. He said the wind up there on the heights of human aspiration always made him long and pray. Asking him one day something about his going to church so seldom, all he answered was, "My dear boy, it does me ten times more good to get outside the spire than to go inside the church." I never knew a man in whom the inward was so constantly clothed upon by the outward, whose ordinary habits were so symbolic of his spiritual tastes, or whose likings in the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears were so much ruled by his highest feelings: when he looked down on the red roofs of Antwerp, on the black roofs of Cologne, on the gray roofs of Strasburg, or on the brown roofs of Basel, he was for the time uplifted above the affairs of men, not in dissociation from them, but as regarding them with a truer vision from the heights above them.

He was taken ill and compelled to remain in a small town in the south of France. There he lay for a fortnight, oppressed with some kind of low fever, after which it began to abate. One night he awoke from a more refreshing sleep than he had yet had, but he could not sleep again. It seemed to him afterwards as if he had lain waiting for something. Anyhow something came. As it were a faint musical rain had invaded his hearing; but the night, or the morning, he did not know which, was clear, for the moon was shining on his window-blind. It came nearer. It was a delicate tinkling of bells. It drew nearer and nearer, growing in sweet fulness, till at length a torrent of tinklings went past his window. It was the flow of a thousand little currents of sound, a gliding of silvery threads, like the talking of water-ripples against the side of a barge in a slow canal—all as soft as the moonlight, as exquisite as an odour, each sound tenderly truncated and dull. A great multitude of sheep was shifting its quarters in the night, whence and whither and why he never knew. But to his heart they were the messengers of the Most High. For into that heart, soothed and attuned by their thin harmony, not on the wind that floated without breaking their lovely message, but on the ripples of the wind that bloweth where it listeth, came the words, unlooked for, and their coming unheralded by any mental premonition, "My peace I give unto you." The sounds died

slowly away in the distance, fainting out of the air, even as they had grown upon it, but the words remained. Robert in a few moments was fast asleep, comforted by pleasure into repose; his dreams were of gentle self-consoling griefs; and when he woke in the morning—"My peace I give unto you," was the first thought of which he was conscious. It may be that the sound of the sheep-bells made him think of the shepherds that watched their flocks by night, and they of the multitude of the heavenly host, and they of the song—"On earth peace": I do not know. The important point is not how the words came, but that the words remained—remained until he understood them, and they became to him spirit and life.

He soon recovered strength sufficient to set out once again on his travels, great part of which he performed on foot. In this way he reached Avignon. Coming out of one of its narrow streets towards an open place in the midst of the city, all at once he saw towering above him, on a height that overlooked the whole city and surrounding country, a great crucifix. The form of the Lord of Life still hung in the face of heaven and earth. Robert bowed his head involuntarily. No matter that when he drew nearer the power of it vanished. The memory of it remained with its first impression, and I record it because it had a share in what followed.

He made his way eastward towards the Alps. Passing one day about noon over a desolate heath-covered height, reminding him not a little of the country of his childhood, the silence seized upon him. In the midst of the silence arose the crucifix, and once more the words which had often returned upon him sounded in the ears of the inner hearing, "My peace I give unto you." They were words he had known from the earliest memorial time. He had heard them in infancy, in childhood, in boyhood, in youth: now first in manhood it flashed upon him that the Lord really meant that the peace of his soul should be the peace of their souls; that the peace wherewith his own soul was quiet, the peace at the very heart of the universe, was henceforth theirs—open to them, to all the world to enter and be still. He fell upon his knees, bowed down in the birth of a great hope, held up his hands towards heaven, and cried, "Lord Christ, give me thy peace."

He said no more, but rose, caught up his stick and strode forward, thinking.

He had learned what the sentence meant; what that was of which it spoke he had not yet learned. The peace he had once sought, the peace that lay in the smiles and tenderness of a woman had "overcome him like a summer cloud," and had passed away. But there was surely a deeper, a wider, a grander peace for him than that, if indeed it was the peace wherewith the king of men regarded his approaching end that he left as a heritage to his brothers. Suddenly he found that the earth had begun to live again. The hum of insects arose from the heath around him; the odour of its flowers entered his dulled sense; the wind kissed him on the forehead; the sky domed up over his head; and the clouds veiled the distant mountain tops like the smoke of incense ascending from the altars of the worshipping earth. All nature began to minister to one who had begun to lift his head from the baptism of fire. He had thought that Nature never could be anything to

him again; and she was waiting on him like a mother. Yet he was offended with himself for receiving ministrations the reaction of whose loveliness might no longer gather around the form of Mary St. John. Every wavelet of scent, every toss of a flower's head in the breeze, came with a sting in its pleasure—for there was no woman to whom they belonged. Yet he could not shut them out, for God and not woman is the heart of the universe. Would the day ever come when the loveliness of Miss St. John, felt and acknowledged as never before, would be even to him a joy and a thanksgiving? If ever, then because God is the heart of all.

I do not think this mood, wherein all forms of beauty sped to his soul as to their own needful centre, could have lasted over many miles of his journey. But such delicate inward revelations are none the less precious that they are evanescent. Many feelings are simply too good to last—using the phrase not in the unbelieving sense in which it is generally used, expressing the conviction that God is a hard father, fond of disappointing his children—but to express the fact that intensity and endurance cannot yet coexist in the human economy. But the virtue of the mood depends by no means on its presence. Like any other experience, it may be believed in, and so work even more good, in the absence which leaves the mind free to contemplate it.

At length he came into the Alpine regions. Far off the heads of the great mountains rose into the upper countries of cloud, where the snows settled on their stony heads, and the torrents ran out from beneath the frozen mass to gladden the earth below with the faith of the lonely hills. The mighty creatures lay like grotesque animals of a far-off titanic time, whose dead bodies had been first withered into stone and then worn away by the storms and covered with shrouds and palls of snow till the outlines of their forms were gone, and only a rough shape remained like one just blocked out in the sculptor's marble, vaguely suggesting what the creature had been, or like the corpse of a man under the sheet of death. He came amongst the valleys at their feet, with their blue-green waters hurrying seawards—from stony heights of air into the mass of "the restless wavy plain;" with their sides of rock rising in gigantic terrace after terrace up to the heavens; with their scaling pines, erect and slight, cone-head aspiring above cone-head, ambitious to clothe the bare mass with green, till they failed at length in their upward efforts, and the savage rock shot away and beyond and above them, the white and blue glaciers clinging cold and cruel to their ragged sides, and the dead blank of whiteness covering their final despair. He drew near to the lower glaciers, to find their awful abysses filled with a liquid blue, tender and profound as if fed from the reservoir of some hidden sky intenser than ours; he rejoiced over the velvety green of the fields dotted with the toy-like houses of the mountaineers; he sat for hours listening by the side of their streams; he grew weary, felt oppressed, longed for the air of a wider outlook, and began to climb towards a mountain village of which he had heard from an English traveller. There he would find solitude and freedom in an air as lofty as if he climbed twelve of his beloved cathedral spires piled up in continuous ascent.

After going up for hours in zigzags through pine woods, where the only

sounds were those of the little streams trotting down to the valley below, or the distant hush of some thin waterfall, or of the felling of trees, or of the mill that sawed them into planks—he reached a level in the path. It led along the edge of a precipice descending sheer to the uppermost terrace of the valley he had left. The valley was but a cleft in the mass of the mountain: a little way over sank its other wall, steep as a plumb-line could make it, of solid rock. And from the cleft steamed up ever and anon great blinding clouds of mist, that now wandered about over the nations of rocks beyond, now wrapt himself in their bewildering folds. The one moment the whole creation had vanished, and there seemed scarce enough of existence to plant more than the following footstep upon; the next, a mighty mountain rose in front, crowned with blinding snow, an awful fact; the lovely heavens were over his head, and the green sod under his feet, where the grasshoppers chirped and the gorgeous butterflies flew; while from regions beyond came the bells of the kine and the goats. He reached a little inn, and there took up his quarters.

I am able to be a little more minute in my description, because I have since visited the place myself. Great heights rise around it on all sides. It stands as between heaven and hell, suspended between peaks and gulfs. The wind must roar awfully there in the winter; but the mountains stand away sufficiently not to ruin it with their avalanches, and there are undulating grassy fields all about, save where the chasm sinks to the vale.

The same evening, he was weary again. The next morning it rained, and rained fiercely all day. He resolved to leave the place on the morrow. In the evening it began to clear up. He walked out. The sun was setting, and the snow-peaks were faintly tinged with rose, while the ragged masses of vapour that hung lazy and leaden-coloured about the sides of the abyss were partially dyed a sulky orange red. All faded into gray; but as the sunlight vanished a veil was withdrawn from the face of the moon, already halfway to the zenith, and she gathered courage and shone, till the mountain before him looked lovely as a ghost in the gleam of its snow, and the glimmer of its glaciers. "Ah!" thought Falconer, "such a peace at last is all man can look for—the repose of a spectral Elysium, a world where passion has died away, and only the dim ghost of its memory returns to disturb with a shadowy sorrow the helpless content of its undreaming years. The religion that can do but this much is not a very great or very divine thing. The human heart cannot invent a better it may be, but it can imagine grander results."

He did not yet know what the religion of which he spoke was. As well might a man estimate the power of sweet sounds on the human being, who had himself been born stone-deaf, or pronounce upon the study of mathematics who did not know a square from a circle.

The next morning rose brilliant—an ideal summer day. He would not go yet; he would spend one day more in the place. He opened his valise to find some lighter garments, when his eye fell on a New Testament, which Dr. Anderson had put there. He had never opened it yet. And now he let it lie. Its time had not yet come. He went out for a walk.



"ROBERT FALCONER."



SEWING MACHINES  
FOR



ENTER STRONG MATTHEW T. JONES

SPENCER'S NEW SYSTEM STITCH  
SIX MANTLES SHAWLS EASY CUTTING

D. NICHOLSON & CO.  
NEW YORK

Directing his course up the edge of the valley, he came all at once upon a little stream whose talk he had indeed heard some hundred yards off. It flowed through a grassy hollow, the sides of which were in some parts of a good height, and sloping rather steeply. Water is the same all the world over; but there was more than the water here that brought his childhood back to Falconer. For at the spot where the path led him down to the *burn*, a little crag stood out from the bank,—a gray stone like many he knew on the stream that watered the valley of Rothieden; on the top of the stone grew a little heather; and beside it, bending towards the water, was a silver birch. He sat down on the foot of the rock; the awful mountains had vanished from his sight; he was shut in and protected from their gaze by the high grassy banks; the only unrest was the run of the water beside him, and it sounded so homely, that, in the pleasure of the moment, he began to jabber Scotch to it. He forgot that this stream was born in the clouds, far up where that peak rose into the air behind him; he did not know that a couple of hundred yards from where he sat, it tumbled all but headlong into the valley below; with his country's birch-tree beside him, and the rock crowned with its tuft of heather over his head, he sat lapt in a pleasant memory of the road to Bodyfauld. The quiet as of a Sabbath afternoon fell upon him—that quiet which is the one altogether lovely thing in the Scotch Sabbath; and again the words returned on his mind, “My peace I give unto you.”

But this time he fell a-thinking what the peace of which Jesus spoke was. And it came into his mind as he thought, that Jesus had spoken in another place about giving rest to those that came to him, while here he spoke about “my peace.” Could this *my* mean a certain *kind* of peace that the Lord himself possessed? He remembered the New Testament he had seen in his box that day, and resolved to try whether he could make anything more out of it. He went home quieter in heart than he had been for a long time. In the evening he went back to the same place, and fell to searching the story of Jesus, to see whether he could discover what the peace of Jesus was.

He found that the whole passage stood thus:—

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

He did not leave the place for six weeks. Every day he went to the burn, as he called it, with his New Testament, and tried to make out something of what the Saviour meant. And by the end of the month, it had dawned upon him, he hardly knew how, that the peace of Jesus, although he could not know what it was like till he had it, must have been a peace that came from doing the will of his Father in heaven. From the account he gave of the discoveries he made, I venture to represent them in the driest and most exact form that I can find they will admit of. When I use the word *discoveries*, I need hardly defend myself by saying that I use it entirely with reference to Falconer and his previous knowledge. They were these:—

First,—That a man's business is to do the will of God.

Second,—That God's business is to take care of him.

Third,—Therefore, that a man must never be afraid of anything whatever ; and so,

Fourth,—be left free to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself.

But one day, after his thoughts had cleared themselves considerably as to the mind of Jesus with regard to these things, a new set of questions rushed upon him with sudden inundation :—

“What is the use of all this? How can I tell for certain that there ever was such a man as is here represented? Or, if there was, how am I to be sure that this is the very mind of the Maker of these mountains and butterflies about me? The whole thing seems to belong to another kind of world altogether from this.”

He had been doing nothing all this time but reading the four gospels; he had no other book with him; he knew scarcely anything of the language of the country, and to all intents was in the wilderness as much as Moses at the back of Horeb, or St. Paul when he vanishes in Arabia. Therefore it is not surprising that in that period, short as it was, and much of it as was spent in thought, he should have become so familiar with the words of the gospel story, that they floated about everywhere in his mind; or that at the moment at which I have arrived, the following words should dart to the forefront of his consciousness to meet the invading army of questions :—

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”

Here came words of Jesus again, giving for the one test of their truth, the doing of the will of God by the man himself who wanted to test them.

There was nothing more to be said. But something had to be done. Falconer was not the man to pursue an investigation and stop short at the landing. Only then arose another and most important question: What was this will of God of which Jesus spoke? And here he found himself in difficulty. The theology of his childhood rushed in upon him, threatening to overwhelm him with demands as to feeling and inward action from which his soul turned with sickness and fainting. But he could not say that because they were repulsive to him they could not be the will of God. That they appeared unnatural, unreal, and contradictory to the nature around him, as he had so painfully felt years before in trying to shape his life to them, was not *proof* that they were not of God. But that they demanded what *seemed* to him unjust,—that these demands were founded on what *seemed* to him untruth in God, on ways of thinking and feeling which he would have felt to be degrading in a man,—these were reasons of the very highest nature for refusing to act upon them so long as, from whatever defects it might be in himself, they bore to him this aspect. He saw that while they appeared to be such, even though it might turn out that he mistook them, to acknowledge them would be to wrong God. Still this left him in no better position for practice than before. When he saw what the will of God did mean, he wondered, so simple did it appear, that he had not discovered it at once. Yet not less than a fortnight had he been brooding and pondering over the

question, as he wandered up and down that burnside, or sat at the foot of the heather-crowned stone and the silver-barked birch, before the light dawned upon him.

In trying to understand the words of Jesus by searching back, as it were, for such thoughts and feelings in him as would account for the words he spoke, the perception awoke that at least he could not have meant by the will of God any such theological utterances as those which had troubled him. It was plain that what he came to do was just to lead his life. That he should do the work, such as recorded, and much besides, that the Father gave him to do, this was the will of God concerning him. And to every man whom God had sent into the world, he had given a work to do in that world. There he had to lead the life God meant him to lead. The will of God was to be found and done in the world. The time for thinking was over, and the time for action was come. He rose from his stone of meditation, and returned to the inn, took his staff in his hand, and went down the mountain, not knowing whither he went, but saying as he went, "If it was the will of God who made me and her that it should be so, I will not set my will against his. I cannot be happy, but I will bow my head to let the waves and billows go over me. If there is such a God, he knows what a pain I bear. His will be done. Jesus thought it well that his will should be done in him even to the death. Even if there be no God, it is something grand to be a disciple of such a man, to do as he says, think as he thought—perhaps come to feel as he felt."

My reader may wonder that one so young should have been able to think so practically and to the one point of action. But what lay at the root of his character, at the root of all that he did, felt, and became, was childlike simplicity and purity of nature. If the sins of his father were mercifully visited upon him, so likewise were the grace and loveliness of his mother. And between the two, Falconer had fared well.

As he descended the mountain, the one question was—his calling. Had he had the faintest track to follow, or the clue of a spider's thread to guide him, he would have had no doubt that his business was to find, and save his father. But never since the day when the hand of that father struck him down, and Mary St. John found him bleeding on the floor, had he heard word or conjecture concerning him. If he were to set out to find him now, it would be to search the earth for one who might have vanished from it years ago. He might as well search the streets of a great city for a lost jewel. When the time came for him to find his father, if such was written in the decrees of—I dare not say Fate, for Falconer hated the word—if such was the will of God, he would receive some sign—that is, some hint which he could follow with action. Now, what was plainer than that he should get ready for anything that might show itself? Therefore he must go on learning till the call came. But he shivered at the thought of returning to Aberdeen. Might he not continue his studies in Germany? Would that not be as good—possibly, from the variety of the experience, better? But how was it to be decided? By submitting the matter to the friend who made either possible. Dr. Anderson had been to him as a father: he would

be guided by his pleasure. He wrote to him therefore, saying that he would return at once if he wished it, but that he would greatly prefer going to a German university for two years or so. The doctor replied that of course he would like to have him home, but that he liked better to have him follow the course that would give him the greatest contentment, for he was confident that he knew best what was best for himself; therefore he had only to settle where he thought proper, and the next summer he would come and see him wherever he was, for he was not tied to Aberdeen any more than Robert was.

He went into Germany; began to study the language; made the readier progress that he was a Scotchman, whose native offshoot of speech came from the Anglo-Saxon bough nearer to the Gothic trunk than the English of the same date; wandered about from place to place, talking, reading, and taking lessons in the language.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOME AGAIN.

Four years passed before Falconer returned to his native country. During this period Dr. Anderson had visited him twice, and had been well satisfied with his condition and pursuits. The doctor had likewise visited Rothieden, had comforted the heart of the grandmother with regard to her Robert, and had, from what he learned there, come to a true conjecture, I believe, as to the cause of the great change which had suddenly taken place in him. But he never asked Robert a question leading in the direction of the grief which he saw the healthy and earnest nature of the youth was gradually assimilating into his life. He had too much respect for sorrow to approach it with curiosity. He had learned to put off his shoes when he drew nigh the burning bush of human pain.

Robert had not settled at any of the universities, but had moved from one to the other as he saw fit, report guiding him to the men who spoke with authority. The time of doubt and anxious questioning was not yet by any means over, but the time was long gone by—if in his case it had ever been—when he could be like a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed. He had ever one anchor of the soul, and he found that that held—the faith of Jesus (I say the faith of Jesus, not his own faith in Jesus), the truth of Jesus, the life of Jesus. However his intellect might be tossed, on the waves of speculation and criticism, he found that the word the Lord had spoken remained steadfast; for in doing righteously, in loving mercy, in walking humbly, the conviction increased that Jesus knew the very secret of human life. Now and then some great vision gleamed across his soul of the working of all things towards a far-off goal of simple obedience to a law of life, which God knew, and which his son had justified through sorrow and pain. Again and again the words of the Master gave him a peep into a region where all was explicable, where all that was crooked might be made straight, where every mountain of wrong might be made low, and every valley of suffering exalted. Ever and again some one of the dark perplexities of humanity began to glimmer with light in its inmost depth. Nor was he without those moments



of communion when the creature is lifted into the secret place of the Most High. And looking back to the time when he had seemed to himself to cry and not be heard, he saw that God had been hearing, had been answering, all the time; had been making him such that he could receive the gift for which he prayed. He saw that intellectual difficulty encompassing the highest operations of harmonizing truth, could no more affect their reality than the dulness of chaos disprove the motions of the wind of God over the face of its waters. Any true revelation must come out of the unknown in God through the unknown in man. Its truths must rise in the man as powers of life, and only as that life grows and unfolds can the slow-following intellect gain glimpses of partial outlines fading away into the infinite. Indeed, only in material things and the laws that belong to them, are outlines possible.

At the close of these four years, with mind calm and hopeful, truth his passion, and music, which again he had resumed and diligently cultivated, his pleasure, Falconer returned to Aberdeen. He was received by Dr. Anderson as if he had indeed been his own son. In the room stood a tall figure, with its back towards them, pocketing its handkerchief. The next moment the figure turned, and—could it be?—yes, it was, Shargar. Doubt was gone the instant he opened his mouth, and said "Eh, Robert!" with which exclamation he threw himself upon him, and after a very undignified fashion began crying heartily. Tall as he was, Robert's great black head towered above him, and his shoulders were like a rock against which Shargar's slight figure leaned. He looked down like a compassionate mastiff upon a distressed Italian grayhound. His eyes shimmered with feeling, but Robert's tears, if he ever shed any, were kept for very solemn occasions. He was more likely to weep for awful joy than for any sufferings either in himself or others. "Shargar!" pronounced in a tone full of a thousand memories, was all the greeting he returned; but his great manly hand pressed Shargar's delicate long-fingered one with a grasp which must have satisfied his friend that everything was as it had been between them, and that their friendship from henceforth would take a new start. For with all that Robert had seen, thought, and learned, now that the bitterness of loss had gone by, the old times and the old friends were dearer. If there was any truth in the religion of God's will, in which he was a disciple, every moment of life's history which had brought soul in contact with soul, must be sacred as a voice from behind the veil.

Therefore he could not now rest until he had gone to see his grandmother.

"Will you come to Rothieden with me, Shargar? I beg your pardon—I oughtn't to keep up an old nickname," said Robert, as they sat that evening over a tumbler of toddy.

"If you call me anything else, I'll cut my throat, Robert, as I told you before. If any one else does," he added, laughing, "I'll cut his throat."

"Can he go with me, doctor?" asked Robert, turning to their host.

"Certainly. He has not been to Rothieden since he took his degree. He's a Master of Arts now, and has distinguished himself besides. I hope

you'll see him in his uniform soon. Let's drink his health, Robert. Fill your glass."

The doctor filled his glass slowly and solemnly. He seldom drank even wine, but this was a rare occasion. He then rose, and with equal slowness and a tremor in his voice which rendered it impossible to imagine the presence of anything but seriousness, said,

"Robert, my son, let's drink the health of George Moray, Gentleman. Stand up."

Robert rose, and in his confusion Shargar rose too, and sat down again, blushing till his hair looked yellow beside his cheeks. The men repeated the words, "George Moray, Gentleman," emptied their glasses, and resumed their seats. Shargar rose trembling, and tried in vain to speak. The reason in part was, that he tried to utter himself in English.

"Hoots! Damn English!" he broke out at last. "Gin I be a gentleman, Dr. Anderson and Robert Falconer, it's you twa 'at's made me ane, an' God bless ye, an' I'm yer hooble servant to a' etairnity."

So saying, Shargar sat down, filled his own glass with trembling hand, emptied it to hide his feelings but without success, rose, and retreated to the hall for a space.

The next morning Robert and Shargar got on the coach and went to Rothieden. Robert turned his head aside as they came near the bridge and the old house of Bogbonnie. But, ashamed of his weakness, he turned again and looked at it. There it stood, all the same,—a thing for the night winds to howl in, following each other in mad gambols through its long passages, and rooms ever so empty that not even a ghost had any reason for going there—a place almost without a history—dreary emblem of so many empty souls that have hidden their talent in a napkin and have nothing to return for it when the Master calls them. Then he felt stronger to meet those other places before which his heart quailed yet more. He had heard from his grandmother that Miss St. John had left soon after Mr. Ericson's death, and he did not know whether he was sorry or glad that he would not see her in Rothieden. He thought that the place would look to him like Pompeii, a city buried and disinterred; but when the coach drove into the long straggling street, he found the old love revive, and although the blood rushed back to his heart when Captain Forsyth's house came in view, he did not turn away, but made his eyes, and through them his heart, familiar with its desolation. He got down at the corner, and leaving Shargar to go on to the Boar's Head and look after the luggage, walked into his grandmother's house, and straight into her little parlour. She rose with her old stateliness when she saw a stranger enter the room, and stood waiting his address.

"Weel, grannie," said Robert, and took her in his arms.

"The Lord's name be praised!" faltered she. "He's ower guid to the likes o' me."

And she lifted up her voice and wept.

She had been informed of his coming, but she had not expected him till the evening; he was much altered, and old age is slow.

He had hardly placed her again in her chair, when Betty came in. If she had shown him respect before, her reverence was now overpowering.

"Eh, sir!" she said, "I didna ken it was you, or I wadna hae come into the room ohn chappit at the door. I'll awa' back to my kitchie."

So saying, she turned to leave the room.

"Hoots! Betty," said Robert, "dinna be a gowk. Gie's a grip o' yer han'."

But Betty stood staring and irresolute, so much was she overcome at the sight of the manly bulk before her.

"Gin ye dinna behave yersel', Betty, I'll jist awa' ower to Muckledrum, an' see what the sessions-buik has against ye."

Betty laughed for the first time at the awful threat, and the ice once broken, things returned to something of the old footing of friendliness.

But I must not linger on these days. Robert paid a visit to Bodyfauld the next morning, and found that time had there flowed past so gently that it had left but few wrinkles and few grey hairs on Mr. and Miss Lammie. The fields, too, had little change to show; and the hill was all the same, save that its pines had grown much. His chief mission here, however, was to the cotter, John Hewson, and his wife. When he left for the Continent, he was not so utterly absorbed in his own griefs as to forget Jessie. He told her story to Dr. Anderson, and that good man had gone to see her the very same day.

In the evening, when he knew they would both be at home, he walked into the cottage. They were seated by the fire, with the same pot hanging on the same crook for their supper. They rose, and asked him to sit down, but did not know him. When he told them who he was, John Hewson smiled with something like the old smile, but only like it, for it had no "rays proportionately delivered" from his mouth over his face. But he shook hands with him warmly, and so did his wife.

After a little indifferent chat, Robert said:

"I came through Aberdeen yesterday, John."

At the very mention of Aberdeen, John's head sunk forward. He gave no answer, but sat looking in the fire. His wife rose and went to the other end of the room, busying herself quietly about the supper. Robert thought it best to plunge into the matter at once.

"I saw Jessie last nicht," he said.

Still there was no reply. John's face had grown hard as a stone face, but rather, Robert thought, from the determination to govern his feelings than from resentment against his daughter.

"She's been doin' weel ever since she left Rothieden."

Still no word from either, and Robert fearing that some outburst of indignation might stop him before he had finished what he had to say, made haste.

"She's been a servant in Dr. Anderson's for four year noo, an' he's sair pleased wi' her. She's a fine woman. But her bairnie's deid, an' that was a sair blow till her."

He heard a sob from the mother, but John made no sign.

"It was a bonnie bairnie as ever ye saw, an' she says it luikit in her face

as gin it kent a' about it, and had only come to help her throu the warst o' t; for it gaed hame maist as sune 's ever she was richt able to thank God for sen'in' her sic an angel to lead her to repentance."

"John," said his wife, coming up behind his chair, and laying her hand on his shoulder, "what for dinna ye speyk? Ye hear what Maister Faulkner says," she added, wiping her eyes with her apron. "Ye dinna think 'at a thing's clean useless 'cause there may be a spot upo' 't?"

"A spot upo' 't!" cried John, starting to his feet. "What ca' ye a spot?—Wuman, dinna drive me mad to hear ye lichtlie the glory o' virginity."

"That's a' verra weel," interposed Robert quietly; "but there was ane, John, that thoct as muckle o' 't as ye do, but wad hae been ashamed to hear ye speak that gait about yer ain dochter."

"I dinna unnerstan' ye," returned Hewson, looking *raised-like* at him.

"Dinna ye ken, man, that amo' them 'at kent the Lord best whan he cam frae haiven to luik efter his ain—to seek and to save, ye ken—amo' them 'at cam roon about him to hearken till 'im, was lasses 'at had gane the wrang gait a' thegither,—no like your bonnie Jessie 'at fell but ance. Man, ye're jist like Simon the Pharisee, 'at was sae scunnert at oor Lord 'cause he loot the wuman 'at was a sinner tak' her wull o' 's feet—the feet 'at they war gaen' to tak' their wull o' efter anither fashion afore lang. He wad hae shawn her the door—Simon wad—like you, John; but the Lord tuik her pairt: an' lat me tell you, John—an' I winna beg yer pardon for sayin' 't, for it's God's trowth—lat me tell you, 'at gin ye gang on that gait ye'll be sidin' wi' the Pharisee, an' no wi' oor Lord. Ye may lippen to yer wife, ay, an' to Jessie hersel', that kens better nor eyther o' ye, no to mak' little o' virginity. Faith! they think mair o' 't than ye do, I'm thinkin', efter a'; only it's no a thing to say muckle about. An' it's no to stan' for a' thing."

A silence followed. John had sat down again, and buried his face in his hands. At length, he said from between them, without lifting his head:

"The lassie's weel?"

"Ay," answered Robert.

"What wad ye hae me do?"

"I wad hae ye sen' a kin' word till her. The lassie's hert's jist longin' efter ye. That's a', and that's no ower muckle."

"Deed no," assented the mother, evidently glad to have found such an ally.

John did not say more, but when his visitor rose he bade him a warm good-night; and when Robert returned to Aberdeen he was the bearer of such a message as made poor Jessie glad to the heart, notwithstanding all she had come through.

This was Robert's first experience of the sort. It was not his last.

He was to spend the night at Bodyfauld. When he left John Hewson's cottage, he did not return to the house, but threaded the little forest of pines, till he came out on the bare crown of the hill, where nothing grew but heather and blaeberries. There he threw himself down, and gazed into the sky. The sun was some way below the horizon; all the dazzle was gone out of the gold in the west, and its roses were fast fading; the downy blue

of the sky was trembling into stars over his head; the brown dusk was gathering in the air; and a wind full of gentleness and peace came to him from the west. He let his thoughts go where they would, and they went up into the abyss over his head.

"Lord, come to me," he cried in his heart, "for if I were to go up through that awful space for ages and ages, I should never find thee. Yet there thou art. It is thy tender infinitude that looks upon me from that sky. It is thy thought and thy care that uphold these heavens and these thoughts of mine that embrace them. Because thou thinkest, I think. I am thine, all thine. I abandon myself to thee. Fill me with thyself. And when I am full of thee, my griefs will grow rosy in the light of thy sun. For if thou holdest them and their cause, surely thou wilt find some nobler atonement between them than vile forgetfulness and the death of love." Lord, let me help those that are wretched because they do not know thee, do not know that thou sufferest for and with them that they may be partakers of thy ineffable peace. My life is hid in thee: take me in thy hand as Gideon bore the pitcher to the battle. Let me be broken if need be, that this light may shine upon the lies that consume their hearts."

Something like this he prayed. One evening, having found the following verses written on the fly-leaf of a copy of Dante which he gave me, I asked him if they were his own, although I had not the smallest doubt in the matter. This led to a conversation in his chambers which brought our hearts close together, and made him able to speak freely of what he loved most. When I went home, I found that prayer on the other side of the leaf. Here are the verses:

O Lord, I love thy sky and sun,  
Thy fields and mountains hoar,  
Thy wind that over me doth run—  
Thy will, I love it more.

I love thy hidden truth to seek  
All round, in sea, on shore;  
The arts whereby like gods we speak—  
Thy will to me is more.

I love thy men and women, Lord,  
The children round thy door;  
Calm thoughts that inward strength afford—  
Thy will, O Lord, is more.

But when thy will my life doth hold,  
Thine to the very core,  
The world, which that same will did mould,  
I shall love ten times more.

Having persuaded Shargar to remain with Mrs. Falconer for a few days, to remove the feeling of offence she still cherished because of his "munelicht flittin'," he returned to Dr. Anderson, who now unfolded his plans for him. These were, that, as he did not want to part with him, and yet Robert must be employed, and that usefully, he should attend the medical classes common to the two universities, and at the same time accompany him in his visits to



the poor. He did not at all mean, he said, to determine his life as that of a medical man, but from what he had learned of Robert's feelings, he was confident that a knowledge of medicine would be invaluable to him. I think the doctor must have foreseen the kind of life which Falconer, with the choice he intended to render possible to him, would choose to lead, and with a true and admirable wisdom, sought to prepare him for it. However this may be, Robert entertained the proposal gladly, went into the scheme with his whole heart, and now began to widen that knowledge of the poor which was the foundation of his influence over them.

Now indeed, for a time, he had enough to do—what with a diligent and careful attendance of lectures, sufficient reading, his rounds with Dr. Anderson, and such work as he delegated to his greater strength. Had the healing art been far less of a delight, he could hardly have failed to make great progress in it; but seeing that it fell in with his best and deepest feelings, theories, and hopes, and that he received it as a work given him to do, it is not to be wondered at that a certain faculty of cure, appearing almost to partake of the instinctive, should have been rapidly developed in him, to the wonder and delight of his friend and master: it was born of love.

In this work he continued for about four years more, during which time he gathered much knowledge of human nature, learning especially a lesson he was especially fitted to learn, that we must not judge human nature from any individual standpoint, but from a divine faith that God is the God of the whole earth, yea of every darkest corner in the human breast. The man who cannot feel the humanity of his neighbour because he is different from himself in education, habits, opinions, morals, circumstances, objects, is utterly unfit to do anything for him.

Within this period Shargar had gone out to India, and had distinguished himself, especially on a certain harassing march. Towards its close he had leave of absence to visit his native country. About the same time Robert, in consequence of a fever brought on by over-fatigue, had begun to desire a holiday. He had been hard at work ever since he accepted Dr. Anderson's plan; and the doctor proposed that he should meet Moray at Southampton. He went. Shargar had no expectation of seeing him, and his delight, if not greater on that account, was certainly less under his control. Not the thinnest film had grown over his heart. But in everything else he was considerably changed. The army had done everything that was needed for his outward show of man. His drawling walk had vanished, and a firm step at the end of a soldierly stride had taken its place; his bearing was free, yet dignified; his high descent came out in the ease of his carriage and manners: there could be no doubt that at last Shargar was a gentleman. His complexion was much darkened with the Indian sun. His hair was changed to a kind of red chestnut. His eyes were darker, and did not roll slowly from one object to another, but indicated by their quick glances a mind ready to observe and as ready to resolve. His whole appearance was more than prepossessing, it was even striking.

Robert was delighted with the change in him, and especially when he found that his mind's growth had at least kept pace with his body's change.

It would be more correct to say that it had preceded and occasioned it; for however much the army may be able to do in that way, it had certainly, in Moray's case, only seconded the law of inward growth working outward development.

The young men went up to London together. I must leave it to my reader to represent to himself the pleasure they had in each other's society, after so long a separation in which their hearts had remained unchanged while their natures had grown both worthy and capable of more honour and affection. Shargar was no more worldly than he had been, and Robert's constant endeavour was to leave the world behind him and judge righteous judgment. Both of them had much to tell; for Robert was naturally open, and, save about his past grief, ready to talk; while Shargar was even proud of being able to communicate with Robert from a nearer level, in virtue of now knowing many things that Robert could not know. They went together to a hotel in St. Paul's Churchyard.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A FADING GLIMMER.

At the close of a fortnight Falconer thought it time to return to his duties in Aberdeen. On the day before the steamer sailed, they found themselves, about six o'clock, in Gracechurch-street. It was a fine summer evening. The street was a little less crowded than it is earlier in the afternoon: although there was a continuous stream of waggons, omnibuses, and cabs both ways, there seemed no great danger of a block any more for that night. They were standing on the pavement, a little way north of Lombard-street.

"You see, Shargar," said Robert, "Nature will have her way. Not all the hurry and confusion and roar of this terrible place can keep the shadows out. Look: wherever there is a space vacant for a moment, there falls a shadow, as grotesque, as strange, as full of unutterable things as any shadow on a field of grass and daisies."

"Yes," returned Shargar, "I remember feeling the same kind of thing in India, where nothing looked as if it belonged to the world I was born in, but my own shadow. But in such a street the shadows themselves look as if they belonged to another region, and had no business here."

"I quite feel that," returned Falconer. "They seem to come like angels, from the lovely west and the pure air, to show that London cannot hurt them, for it too is within the Kingdom of God; and that the lovers of nature, like the old orthodox Jew, St. Peter, must be taught to call nothing common or unclean."

They were standing side by side on the curbstone of the pavement. Hearing no response from Shargar, Robert turned his head to look at him. He was staring with wide eyes into, not at the crowd of vehicles that filled the street. His face was pale, and he was liker the Shargar of old days than Robert had seen him since his return.

"What's the matter with you, Shargar?" he asked; but he received no answer. So he too looked in the direction in which Shargar was staring, and saw a strange sight for London city.

In the middle of the crowd, with an omnibus before them, and a brewer's dray behind them, came a line of three donkey-carts, heaped high with bundles and gipsy-gear generally. The foremost was conducted by a middle-aged woman of tall and commanding aspect, and expression both cunning and fierce. She walked by the donkey's head with a short stick in her hand, with which she struck him now and then, but which she oftener waved over his head like the truncheon of an excited marshal on the battle-field, accompanying its movements now with loud cries to the animal, now with loud response to the chaff of the omnibus-conductor, the dray driver, and the tradesmen in carts about her. She was followed by a very handsome, olive-complexioned, wild-looking young woman, her black hair done up in a red handkerchief, who conducted her donkey more quietly. Both seemed as much at home in the roar of Gracechurch-street, as if they had been crossing a wild common. A loutish-looking young man brought up the rear with the third donkey. From amongst the bundles on the foremost cart peeped a lovely fair-haired English-looking child.

Robert took in all this in a moment. And the same moment Shargar's spell was broken.

"Lord, it *is* my mither!" he cried, and darted under a horse's neck into the middle of the *ruck*: just then a slight block had occurred. He needed his way through till he reached the woman, who was then swearing at a cabman whose fore wheel had caught the point of her donkey's shaft, and was hauling him round. Heedless of everything else, Shargar threw his arms about her, crying,

"Mither! mither!"

"Nane o' yer blastit humbug!" exclaimed the woman, and, with a vigorous push and a wriggle, freed herself from the onset of affection.

The moment she had done so, however, and thus had him at arm's length, her hand closed upon his arm. Her other hand went up to her brow, and from underneath it her eyes shot up and down him from head to foot, while he could feel her hand closing and relaxing and closing again, as if she were trying to force her long nails into his flesh. He stood motionless, waiting the result of her scrutiny, utterly unconscious that he caused a congestion in the veins of London; for though the obstruction was over, not a vehicle within sight of the pair stirred. Falconer said a strange silence fell upon that part of the street, as if all had been turned into the shadows of which they had been speaking.

The silence was broken by a rough voice, which sounded across it as if all London must have heard it. It was the voice of the cabman who had been in altercation with the gipsy. Bursting into an insulting laugh, he used words with regard to the woman, which are better unrecorded. The same instant Shargar freed himself from her grasp, and stood by the fore wheel of the cab.

"Get down!" he said, in a voice that was in no wise less impressive that it was low and hoarse.

The fellow saw what he meant, and began to whip his horse. Shargar sprung on the box, and dragged him down all but headlong.

"Now," he said, "beg my mother's pardon."

"Be damned if I do, &c., &c.," said the cabman.

"Then defend yourself," said Shargar. "Robert."

Falconer was watching it all, and was by his side in a moment.

"Come on, you, &c., &c.," cried the cabman, who plucked up heart and put himself in fighting shape. He looked one of those insolent fellows whom none see discomfited so gladly as the honest men of his own class. Almost the same moment he lay between his horse's feet.

All this passed so rapidly that there had been no time for the police to interfere. Shargar turned to Robert, and saying only, "There, Robert!" turned again towards the woman. The cabman rose bleeding, and, desiring no more of the same, climbed on his box, lapt in a roar from the street, for every one of the spectators was delighted at his punishment, and went off, belabouring his horse as if he had been the sole cause of it.

"Now, mother," said Shargar, panting with excitement.

"What ca' they ye?" she asked, still doubtful, but as proud of being defended, as if the coarse words of her assailant had had no truth in them.

"Shargar," said Moray, bravely.

"Ye canna be my lang-leggit loon Geordie."

"What for no?"

"Ye're a gentleman, faith."

"An' what for no, again?" said Moray, beginning to smile.

"Weel, it's weel speired. Yer father was ane only gait—gin sae be 'at ye are as ye say.

Moray put his head close to hers, and whispered some words that nobody heard but herself.

"It's ower lang syne to min' upo' that," she said, with a look of cunning consciousness ill settled upon her fine features. "But ye can be naeboddy but my Geordie. Haith, man!" she went on, regarding him once more from head to foot, "but ye're a credit to me, I maun alloo. Weel, gie me a sovereign, an' I s' never come near ye."

Poor Shargar turned half mechanically towards Robert, who felt that it was now time to interfere. But Shargar recovered himself a little.

"You forget, mother," he said, "it was me that claimed you, and not you that claimed me."

She did not seem to have any idea of what he meant.

"Come up the road, here, to oor public, an' tak' a glaiss, wuman," said Falconer. "Dinna haud the fowk luikin' at ye."

The temptation of a glass of something strong, and the hope of getting money out of them, caused an instant acquiescence. She said a few words to the young woman, who proceeded at once to tie her donkey's head to the tail of the other cart, while the elder turned again to Falconer.

"Shaw the gait than," she said.

Falconer and Moray led the way to St. Paul's Churchyard, and she followed faithfully. The waiter stared when they entered their hotel, but showed them to a private room.

"Bring a glass of whisky," said Falconer. She tossed it off, and looked as if she would like another, but, turning to her son, said,

"Yer father 'll hae ta'en ye up, I'm thinkin', laddie?"

"No," said Moray, gloomily. "There's the man 'at took me up."

"An' wha may ye be?" she asked, turning to Falconer.

"Mr. Falconer," said Moray. "You knew his grandmother at Rothieden."

"No a son o' Anerew Faukner?" she said, with evident interest.

"The same," answered Robert.

"Weel, Geordie," said the woman, turning once more to her son, "it's like mither, like father to the twa o' ye."

"Did you know my father?" asked Robert, eagerly.

But she did not answer him until she had made another remark to her son.

"He needna be ashamed o' *your* company, ony gait, queer kin' o' a mither 'at I am."

"He's never been ashamed o' my company," said Moray, still gloomily.

"I kent yer father weel eneuch," she said, now answering Robert. "Mair by token 'at I saw him last nicht."

Robert sprung from his seat, and caught her by the arm.

"Ow! ye needna gang into sic a flurry. *He* 'll no come near ye, I s' warran'."

"Tell me where he is," said Robert. "Where did you see him? I'll gie ye a' 'at I hae gin ye'll tak me till him."

"Hooly! hooly! Wha's to gang luikin' for a thrum in a hay-sow?" returned she, coolly. "I only said 'at I saw him."

"But are ye sure it was him?" asked Falconer, with eagerness.

"Ay, sure eneuch," she answered.

"What maks ye sae sure?"

"'Cause I never was wrang yet. Set a man ance atween my twa e'en, an' there 'll be ane 'at kens him whan 's ain mither 's forgotten 'im."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Maybe ay, an' maybe no. I didna come here to be hecklet afore a jury."

"Ye can tell me at least what he's like," said Robert, vexed and not knowing what to make of her.

"'Gin ye dinna ken what he's like, what for suld ye tak the trouble to luik for him? But 'deed ye'll ken what he's like whan ye fa' in wi' him," she added, with a vindictive laugh; though why vindictive except it were because he had given her only one glass of strong drink, Robert did not know.

With the laugh she rose, and made for the door. They rose at the same moment to detain her. Like one who knew how both to fight and flee, she turned and stunned them as with a blow.

"She's a fine yong thing, yon sister o' yours, Geordie. She'll be worth siller by the time she's had a while at the schuil."

The young men looked at each other aghast. While they turned their eyes she had vanished. They rushed to the door, and parting, searched in both directions, but were soon satisfied that it was of no use. Probably she had found a back way into Paternoster Row, whence the outlets were manifold.



## A POET'S MOODS.

## I.

THIS world is all too sad for tears ;  
 I would not weep, not I,  
 But smile along my life's short road,  
 Until I smiling die.

The little flowers breathe sweetness out  
 Through all the dewy night ;  
 Should I more churlish be than they,  
 And 'plain for constant light ?

Not so, not so ; no load of woe  
 Need bring despairing frown ;  
 For while we bear it, we can bear—  
 Past that, we lay it down.

## II.

Is the world so very sad a place ?  
 Looking out here, through geranium leaves,  
 We can see the sky all rosy grace,  
 And can feel, what one of us believes,  
 That he giveth his beloved sleep,  
 Not in death alone we cease to weep.

Softly, shining cloudlets come and go,  
 While the blue shows deeper in between,  
 And the very sunset leaves a glow  
 Lovelier than all rays the day has seen ;  
 Flecks of light make blossoms on the floor,  
 Silent music wraps us o'er and o'er.

Still and quiet, with intensest calm,  
 As the centre of all motion rests,  
 So we breathe away these hours of balm,  
 Rise with strengthened hearts within our breasts.  
 Go, dear, but remember, through all weather,  
 We are friends, we were in heaven together.

## III.

Eyes that once looked into mine,  
 Changing, softening, shining ;  
 Hair that round my heart did twine,  
 As we two reclining  
 Wooed the sweet from heather spray,  
 Lived our love one summer day—  
 Does it live yet, far away ?  
 Am I only pining ?

Pining, said I?—not for me  
 Be the joyous being,  
 Satisfied to wander free,  
 Satisfied with seeing.  
 Where my lover once hath trod  
 Ever sacred be the sod,  
 Dedicate as if to God,  
 Till he will its freeing.

Vanished as a fallen tear,  
 Sight and sound endearing ;  
 Silence, darkness, linger here—  
 Think you I am fearing ?  
 Fear for men of feeble mould,  
 Fear for maids whose hearts are cold :  
 Thus shall be our story told,  
 Sweet will be the hearing.

## IV.

In a bed of rushes woven,  
 Sleep, my baby, sleep,  
 Gurgling water, lapping round him,  
 Watch and ward to keep,  
 While the reeds spread out above him  
 Shadows still and deep.

Clinging hands must loose me, loose me,  
 Kissing lips be dry ;  
 Longing eyes grow dim and dreamy,  
 Curls in quiet lie ;  
 Baby must in peace forget me,  
 And his love must die.

River, river, flowing past him,  
 Bear his tears away ;  
 River, river, flowing to him,  
 Bring him joy, I pray ;  
 Softest breezes, lily-scented,  
 Round his beauty play ;  
 Hush thee, dearest, fairest, rarest—  
 Here I must not stay.

## V.

How shall I comfort thee, O friend of friends ?  
 If I were weeping, thou couldst comfort me  
 With just a touch upon my bowed head :  
 If I were blind, thy kiss should heal mine eyes

And bring them into life and light again :  
 If I were deaf with sobs tempestuous,  
 Thy voice would pierce the storm with "Peace be still."  
 But thou, O friend ! how can I comfort thee ?

With counsel ? but my wisdom is all thine,  
 The overflowings of thy bounteous spring :  
 I have no knowledge, dear, but thou hast given ;  
 No insight, save what thou hast brought to me.  
 How can I guide ? thou only know'st the way,  
 I am but as the staff within thy hand—  
 A trusty staff ; lean on me, dear, I pray.  
 But, O, my friend ! how shall I comfort thee ?

I can but weep with thee, O friend of friends !  
 And bid thee use me even as thou wilt.  
 Dost wish for smiles ? they come at thy command,—  
 For song ? that, birdlike, only waits thy call ;  
 Will dying serve thee ? let me quickly die ;  
 Will living serve thee ? let me live for aye.  
 Such as my being is, 'tis wholly thine.  
 But still, O friend ! how shall I comfort thee ?

## VI.

Wait for a moment, Death, I pray you wait ;  
 I have been waiting years, O friend ! for you.  
 Now that your hand holds mine in firmest grasp,  
 Let me look back, ay ev'n from heaven, to view  
 All the dear earth, and make my last adieu.

Mountains and purple mists and valleys green,  
 Rivers and moaning seas and lakes asleep,  
 Little white houses where the people live,  
 One little house where mourners watching keep—  
 No, I am still, good Death—souls cannot weep.

Yet it is fair, the earth, so fair, so good !  
 Suffer me, O ye friends who dwell therein !  
 While I implore you not to spurn the earth.  
 Surely to slight God's work is bitter sin ;  
 Surely God does not end where men begin.

Must it be so then, Death—my tale half told ?  
 Must I then leave my message incomplete ?  
 All that I would have said will some one say,—  
 Some one with wings where I had weary feet ?  
 Let it be so—one day we all shall meet.

S. A. D. I.

## SENS-SUR-YONNE.

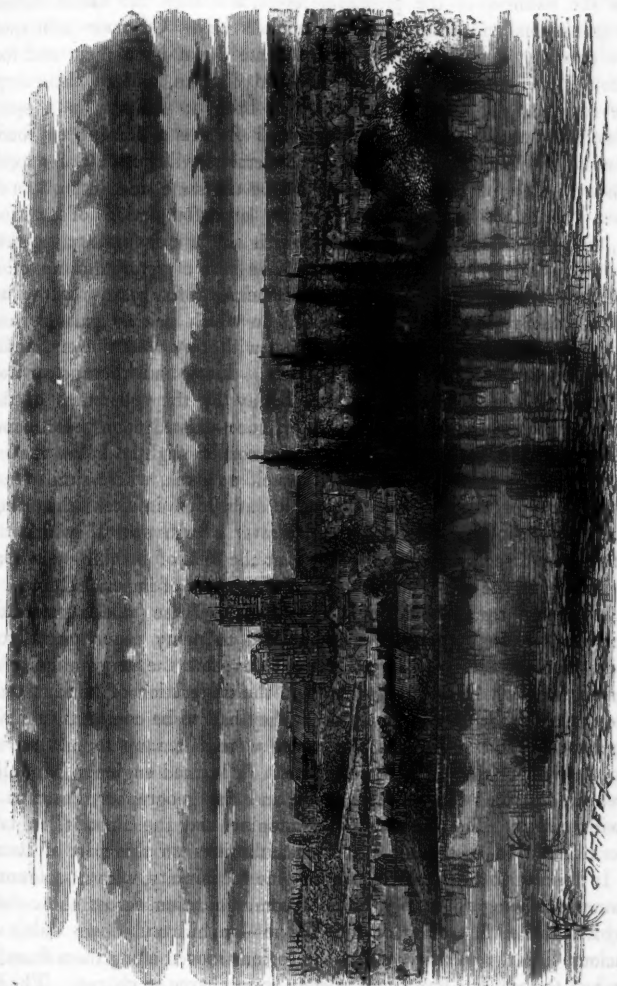
*Hôtel du Grand Écu.*

WHEN I look out of my window across the inn yard (which is shaped like a long horseshoe), I see a white baby being carried about by a *bonne* in a frilled cap, and beyond him, over the curving roof of the horseshoe, I see the great west front and towers of the cathedral rise like a huge fretted rock, golden in the light of the setting sun. These are respectively the youngest and the eldest of the *Sennonais*. I claim for St. Etienne de Sens the dignity of being the oldest inhabitant, for it was founded in the year A.D. 270; the baby, on the other hand, is barely seven months in the world. The boy is baptized as Paul, the church is christened Stephen. Paul is dedicated to the Virgin, after a pretty fashion common to French mothers, and is clothed in white from his boots upwards. St. Etienne is built of great blocks of white stone, which age has darkened to a variety of soft greys and browns, except in the interior, where it shines like snow. Paul is a lively baby, keeping up a ceaseless demand upon the attention of bystanders. St. Etienne rings large bells and little bells from early dawn to falling eve. Lastly, St. Etienne is one of the noblest churches ever wrought by mortal man; but little innocent Paul is a "living temple made without hands."

This hôtel is kept by Paul's father and mother. When I walk along the corridors and look into the rooms, which are, some of them, very stately, I think the house must once have belonged to the noblesse. For instance, there is the chief bedroom, with two large windows, and folding doors which open into the great saloon. A heavy beam runs across the ceiling, a high wainscot clothes the walls; in part of the room the panels rise to the ceiling, notably over the fireplace, where a picture is inserted which represents a young man playing on a musical instrument to a young woman who sits under a tree. I think that this panelling was put up in the last century, and that the Arcadian scene was then incorporated. The building is much older than the art. Our best bedroom contains two large beds, draped with long curtains, red flowers on a brown buff ground, and the walls are adorned with four allegorical portraits of the Seasons. Winter is a lady in a black dress, seated by a marble table on which is a lighted brasier. In her hand she holds a small mask, and when I first looked at her I felt convinced it must be Madame de Sevigné. Such great people found Sens in the direct line with the south, then as now—and came posting down to sleep here, from Paris. On Wednesday, the 3rd of June, 1675, Madame de Sevigné writes to her daughter, Madame de Grignan, who had left her after a long visit, "Je n'ai reçu aucune de vos lettres depuis celle de Sens, et vous savez quelle envie je puis avoir d'apprendre des nouvelles de votre santé et de votre voyage, je suis très persuadée que vous m'avez écrit: je ne me plains que des arrangements ou des dérangements de la poste." It is, however, probable that Madame de Grignan would have lodged in a convent, being *très-liée* with various high ecclesiastics—and herself the great-granddaughter,

through her mother, of St. Françoise de Chantal. But it is more than likely that she had some sort of acquaintance with the family who then dwelt in this great hôtel.

Indeed the place is so full of associations that it affects me like a waking



VIEW OF SENS-SUR-YONNE.

dream. I cannot quite realize that it is really the nineteenth century; and yet one had needs do so, for it is not thirty years since the mayor and municipal council deliberately pulled down the splendid old walls and picturesque town gates, which were literally of all ages, from the third century to the fifteenth.



I asked a townswoman one day why this peculiarly barbarous thing had been perpetrated. "Oh!" quoth she, "on veut toujours etre à la mode!"

And this *mode* has been for Sens of so many divers fashions. If one lies awake musing in the darkness, one sees first the wide valley of the Yonne lying in the stillness of the primæval forest, and then the Gauls coming to take possession, and fixing here a populous city. Of their habitations no trace remains; but when the Romans came down upon them and took them utterly, then arose temples and baths and circuses, and of these ample evidence remains. Of the aqueduct which brought water from a spring ten miles off, near Pont sur Vanne, several fragments have been found, and traces of another between Paron and Collemiers, villages on the opposite or south-west side of the city. In a field on the same side, just where the little river Vanne falls into the Yonne, are the large foundations of La Motte du Ciar, an immense Roman edifice, of which the use or former appearance is unknown; some writers supposing it to have been a pretorian camp, others a temple of Ceres. On the edge of the Vanne a few yards of the wall yet remain; the rest is a mere stony site, on which neither grass nor corn will grow, but which is profusely decorated with tiny wild flowers, finding their nourishment in the innumerable crevices. Here and there clear water has collected in the depressions, which betray by the squareness of their outline that a bath, a chamber, or a corridor, once existed upon these foundations. I sat sheltered from the wind in a corner slightly below the level of the surrounding field, and imagined myself at Ostia, where similar traces of the footsteps of that mighty people lie imbedded in the rich plain of the Tiber, forbidding the ploughshare to traverse each spot of which they took possession three thousand years ago, at the risk of breaking shaft and share against even the last prone vestiges of the power of imperial Rome.

Of the Roman roads which went from Sens to Alise (Alesia), to Meaux (Tatinum), to Orleans (Cænaso-Genabum), and to many other places, some traces and much exact knowledge remain to us; but the very antiquity and stability of the town has naturally involved the destruction of ancient causeways, inasmuch as being constantly used, they had to be constantly renewed from age to age, and sometimes the stones were taken up to make a new route to the right or the left of the old one. A learned engineer, M. Jollair, has carefully described two of these roads, and the geographer Pasumot has dealt with others. The Itinerary of Antonine, and the Theodosian table, may be referred to as the most ancient authorities on this part of Roman Gaul. In the mean time the reader can imagine the fair city, with its colonnades and statues, throwing out straight rays of communication across those fertile hills which girdle the valley of the Yonne—up hill and down dale, with pertinacious linear regularity, while the legions moved along them from city to city, and the prefects journeyed in state from charge to charge. The best preserved of all is that from Sens to Orleans; it crossed the Yonne due west, and went straight up the steep hill, behind which the sun sets in April, till it reached the highland at the top. It is now a deep ravine, hollowed out by the rain between steep banks of chalk. This ravine, overhung with trees and bordered with wild flowers, is very picturesque. It was market-day at

Sens when I climbed its steep pathway, and the country folk were taking it as a short cut to the villages on the table-land of La Gatinais. It can be traced a long way, rising and falling over the monotonous undulations once covered with forest and great pools of water.

With Roman antiquities must be classed the walls, of which a few melancholy scraps remain. Alas! It is but thirty years since they were perfect in their stately strength as when first built to repulse Teutons and Franks in the fourth century. The lower portion was composed of three or five rows of immense blocks of stone, placed one on the top of another without mortar. These had come from the ruin of huge Roman edifices, as shown by the sculpture found on the inside of many, and also by the square holes evidently intended for the insertion of iron cramps. When the walls were taken down in the reign of Louis Philippe, the bas-reliefs and inscriptions hidden amidst a mass of masonry of houses built up on the inner side came to light, and the chief of these were placed in the town museum. They are of the same type and the same dimensions as those found at Dijon and Autun; and they may have been once cased in marble, like those of Orange, Nismes, and Arles. Fragments of marble are found lying about near La Motte du Ciar. But to return to the walls. Above these huge blocks of sculptured stone was a thick wall of bricks, separated into portions of string-courses of finer and redder bricks, as may be seen any day in various parts of England. And in the middle ages a stone crenellatus was added to the top. This grand girdle actually repulsed the Wurtemburgers in 1814. Why twenty years later it was demolished, leaving only a fragment here and there, where some college or convent happened to be firmly glued to its side or perched upon the top, must be asked of the ghosts of the mayor and town council, and of the government of Louis Philippe.

We can hardly exaggerate or even realize the change which passed over the cities of Gaul with the introduction of Christianity—a change which told upon the architecture like the gradual transformation of a dissolving diorama. Roman towns had neither towers, nor spires, nor domes, except such a vast but low curve as that of the Pantheon, which is indeed the only example I remember. Everything in Roman architecture arranges itself in long lines, like the architrave of a glorious colonnade. Even the amphitheatres were *level* in their design—so many level lines one above another. There was a total absence, in public and private buildings, of that spirit of aspiration which causes Gothic architecture to break upwards in fretted towers and pinnacles, the fountain spray of an interior prayer.

It was in the year 270, while yet the beautiful *Agetincium* reflected itself in the waters of the Yonne, and while the neighbouring hills, rich and green as to-day, were sprinkled with villas built after the model of Tusculum and Ostia, that the first stone of the first Christian church was laid by St. Savinien, at the furthest end of one of the richest suburbs of the town, to the east. Here the saint met with a violent death; and here his remains were carefully interred by his disciples. The church was rebuilt in the fifth century, and again in the eleventh. The crypt of Bishop Léotheric, constructed A.D. 1001, is still in existence. Four celebrated inscriptions referring to the martyrdom

are upon its walls, and the great stone covering the altar is the very one on which St. Savinien was offering mass when he was struck from behind. It was broken at the Revolution, but the pieces have been carefully reunited. The upper chancel has been sadly altered and pulled about; sometimes, as in 1795, with a view to devastation, at others with the laudable but ill-secured intention of embellishment. The lower story of the bell-tower has been improved with the rest; but the upper part preserves its steep slate roof and the two beautiful ogival windows on each of the four sides, which date from the first years of the thirteenth century.

Such are the remains of the first Christian church of Sens; but from the fifth century the religious establishments of the city began to increase and multiply. All through the century of Charlemagne, that of St. Louis, and onward through the middle ages until far into the eighteenth century, the *Métropole Sénonaïse* presented a noble assemblage of Gothic monuments—St. Benoit, where St. Thomas à Becket took refuge in 1164; the Benedictines; the Celestines, now the Collège; the Cordeliers, where the celebrated Jean Cousin had painted some of the windows, but where, alas, the hand of destruction fell with total ruin in 1794; the Jacobins, or Dominicans, of which the church is now a barn, and where Giles Charonelles, son of a poor fisherman, first became a monk, and where he died, though at the time General of his Order and Grand Master of the Sacred College at Rome; St. Jean, an abbey church of great beauty; St. Léon; and St. Maurice, with its great gable end and sharp little spire rising so picturesquely from the island between the two bridges and over the Yonne,—such are a few only of the buildings which once made Sens so rich in architectural delight. I must not forget St. Pierre-le-vif, founded in the middle of the sixth century by Sainte Théodéchilde, a king's daughter. The vast fortified buildings of this famous abbey were almost entire at the beginning of the Revolution. They were bought by the Cardinal Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Sens, for a residence. Later, he proposed to make over the magnificent church to the Faubourg. Will it be credited that the inhabitants obstinately refused the gift, alleging a perfectly futile reason? M. de Loménie then caused the building to be rased to the ground, all but the crypt, which subsequently fell in of itself.

In fact, such ruin has fallen on the beautiful City of Churches, that when one now stands upon the western hill, and looks down across the broad river, one sees the picturesque but level town lying on its brink,—here and there a spire or a tower; but in strong pre-eminence, and wholly unsupported by its whilome garland of religious houses and attendant churches,—the great cathedral of St. Etienne. It rises like a vast chiselled rock from the heart of the town, and we are in a hôtel nestled close to its great western front: so that when we put our heads out of the window, we have to look up and up to where the yellow light is just gilding that ornate sixteenth-century pinnacle, which somebody put up quite at the top, as an afterthought; and round which the birds are always wheeling. It is a charming irregularity, which adds both to the grace and, by contrast, to the substantial grandeur of the glorious pile.

In the matter of architectural description it does not answer to be too

technical ; perhaps if the reader is told that Sens is the sister of Canterbury, and that some of the same architects—notably William of Sens—were employed on each, it will best paint the edifice to English eyes. St. Thomas of Canterbury took refuge in Sens, and was long a resident here during his contests with the king.

The first foundation of St. Etienne is due to St. Savinien, who is said to have dedicated a small chapel to the Virgin on the site of a Pagan temple. Like the innumerable French churches which really date from the earliest ages of missionary Christianity, that of Sens got burnt, pulled down, and rebuilt three or four times before the commencement of the noble building which has descended to us. It was St. Anastase who began to lay, in 972, the immense foundations of the present edifice. We find Philippe Augustus building at it two hundred years later ; and the huge north-west tower, called the *Tour de Plomb*, is of his epoch. The corresponding south-west tower fell on Easter Monday, 1267, and it was not completely rebuilt in its present magnificent proportions for nearly three centuries, the *Petite Tourelle* at the corner being the crown and finishing.

Vast, lofty, nobly arched, with a profusion of painted glass windows, some of which are from the hand of Jean Cousin, eighteen side chapels, one of which is dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and another contains the extremely beautiful tomb of the Dauphin and Dauphine, parents of Louis XVI. ;—such is the interior of the cathedral of Sens. When the early morning sunshine streams from the east through the great painted windows, casting brilliant tints upon the universal white, the impression of peaceful splendour is something wonderful. One remembers how St. Louis was wedded here in 1234, and how, five years after, he and his brother Robert, humbly clad in simple white garments, passed through the great west doors, bearing on their shoulders the *Chasse* containing the Crown of Thorns, followed by a great crowd of nobles and common people, habited in the quaint and beautiful costumes of that age.

And in the Sunday afternoons of Lent, when a white-robed Dominican is preaching the *carême*, and the great nave is covered with an attentive auditory, who occupy every inch of floor where the sound of his impassioned voice can possibly attain, St. Etienne shows another kind of grandeur—that of the living church. And when the slow Gregorian chant—which I do not love, for there is something fearful to me in those long-drawn notes—pierces the aisles, it seems as if St. Etienne lifted a warning voice of doom and judgment among the sons of men.

And when at ten o'clock at night one of the two great bells—either Savienne or Potentienne—calls solemnly over the valley of the Yonne, as if it said “Good-night” to all the village churches far and near, I remember the tradition of that other famous bell, baptized Marie, which St. Loup, the archbishop of Sens, caused to be rung during the siege of the town by the Normans and Parisians in 615, and which frightened them so that they took to flight. Marie has disappeared, as might be expected after a lapse of twelve centuries, but Savienne and Potentienne are only 307 years old ; quite youthful, in fact. They are of enormous weight, and are hung on

huge wooden supports in the top of the Tour de Pierre. A few years ago it required sixteen men to ring them; but such great improvements have been wrought in the mechanism that it now takes only four.

How often have I crossed the square before the west front while one of the bells has been calling, calling, calling, from aloft; while the market people have been sitting in picturesque groups all over the pavement, their brilliant flower-stalls displaying early roses and little pink and white camellias in charming contrast with the grey fretted stone!

The great portail suffered cruelly at the Revolution, twelve statues of the apostles were broken, and only the wrought daïs or crowns remain: but the central pillar dividing the two portions of the chief door is very remarkable; it is draped with the vine, and is faced with a fine statue of St. Etienne, which did not suffer in '93, because upon the open book which the martyr holds in his venerable hands is the inscription "Livre de la Loi!" Had one letter been different, and had St. Etienne chanced to have offered to those who passed his portal the Livre de la Foi, this noble statue would assuredly have shared the fate of the surrounding ones. Above the portal is a large ogival window of about the same size. It was filled in 1579 with painted glass by one Jehan Grillot; but this glass was shattered in 1638 by the firing of the cannon in front of the cathedral on the occasion of the birth of Louis XIV. One must, however, pardon the involuntary libation in honour of the heir desired for twenty childless years, and confess with regret that the real injuries to St. Etienne de Sens have been purposely committed; and that not always with any evil intent, but from a mania of improvement at a time when taste was degraded. Above this ogival window are three colossal statues, Christ bestowing benediction and an adoring angel on either side. These are quite new, and whiter than the rest of the façade, because they are the reproduction, as far as old Gothic sculpture can be reproduced, of figures broken by order of the chapter about 1730, to make room for an enormous sun-dial, made at the expense of the then archbishop, Tristran de Sallagard.

Again, the stranger who stands in the great nave, and sees springing up around him the forest of arches which date from the best time of French art, will lament to observe the high altar surmounted by an immense gilded baldachino supported on four Corinthian columns of marble. This was put up in 1742 by Archbishop Languet, after the design of an Italian architect, Servandoni, in the place of the old altar, with its ancient crucifix and its beautiful and curious columns wrought in copper, all of which dated from the early part of the middle ages, but which in 1742 they found *vieux et très mal fait*. So likewise the great screen and two altars, at one of which (that which was to the left) St. Louis and Marguerite of Provence knelt to receive the nuptial benediction, were destroyed in 1762, by Paul d'Albert de Luynes, Cardinal Archbishop, to make room for an objectionable screen in the most pompous style of the last century. The stalls of the choir, with their great panels of carved oak, were also put up in the last century, in the place of the ancient stalls, which were considered ugly, but which we should, no doubt, now think extremely beautiful. In the centre of this choir once stood the mausoleum of the dauphin and dauphine, since removed to a side



chapel. The life of this prince, commonly called "Le Bon Dauphin," was written by the Abbé Proyard, and is a delightful old-fashioned book, to be found in public libraries or picked up on bookstalls. He died, in the flower of his age, at Fontainebleau, to the grievous regret of the French people. Had he lived to reign, the "Bon Dauphin" might perhaps have done something to avert the Revolution, for he appears to have had a firmer hand than his excellent son, Louis XVI.; and he was wide awake to the strides made by the philosophical party in France. But he was cut off by consumption at thirty-six, and buried, as he desired, in the cathedral of the diocese in which Fontainebleau is situated. His excellent young wife did not very long survive; and the two reposed together till their tomb was rifled at the time of the Revolution. Their bodies were then thrown into the public burying ground, with all the revolting coarseness and carelessness of the time. The fosse was too small, and "Le Sieur Edme-Hubert Vérot, ancien religieux Dominicain," who found himself on the spot, helped to arrange the corpses in their new resting place, by encircling the wife with one arm of her dead husband. Such was the evidence given when in 1816 the bodies were sought for and replaced in their tomb.

Lugeat Gallia virum principem,  
Omnibus naturæ donis ornatum,

runs the royal epitaph put up in 1774. The whole inscription is exceedingly beautiful, but contains a painful satire on those who cared nought for the noble character of him who was emphatically,

Fide securus, spe firmus, charitate ardens !

whose short life was full of faith and hope, and of the tender charity which is greater than these !

In the Trésor of the cathedral is preserved an immense velvet mantle, sprinkled with the fleur-de-lys, which was used in the anniversary services for the dauphin and dauphine. These were undoubtedly continued up to the close of the reign of their last surviving son, Charles X. Various other precious objects escaped the revolutionary thieves: ivory coffers; an ivory comb, said to have belonged to St. Loup; tapestry of silk and gold, supposed to have been presented, towards the end of the fifteenth century, by the Cardinal Louis de Bourbon Vendôme, archbishop of Sens. But English eyes will look with far greater interest on the *armoire*, in which are kept the vestments of Thomas à Becket; chasuble, aube, stole, and mitre. This prelate when at Sens inhabited the neighbouring abbey of St. Colombe, which is a little way out of Sens on the road to Paris. It was one of the first houses founded in Gaul, and had a splendid church, with the tomb of St. Colombe supported on white pillars in the middle of the nave; and at his feet the tomb of St. Loup. The abbey was moated, and the fosse supplied by the water of the Yonne; it suffered from the Huguenots in the sixteenth century, and from fire in 1608. Only fragments of the old building now remain, incorporated in a convent, which occupies the old site, and is still girded by the ancient ditch, and where the antiquary will find

much to interest him, though little that can recall the former splendour of the place.

It remains to speak of the archevêché, and somewhat also of the singular picturesque beauty of the streets of the town. The cloister of St. Etienne, where lived the canons, was originally on the north side of the cathedral. It was burnt in 968, and when it was rebuilt, Philip Augustus allowed it to be fortified with strong walls. There were five gates to the enclosure, of which the last two were only destroyed in 1832. The well of the cloister was considered a *chef d'œuvre* of architecture. It is still there, of course, but a mere mass of stones; and the cloister is nearly all gone, with the exception of a very pretty building, dating from the *renaissance*. A *port-cochère* leads through this building into a sort of large court, under the immediate shadow of the cathedral. In this court is the well, and the studio of the only photographer of Sens. He is the son of the *Suisse*; and is a very picturesque young man, with his hair flying down his back. He looked, taken in connection with his singular dwelling, exactly like one of the heroes in Goethe's prose novels.

The archevêché once formed part of this cloister; but after the fire, Archbishop Sevin rebuilt it on the opposite or south side, and left the canons to themselves. Then first was planned that noble hall which now, in restored beauty, raises its high-tiled roof, and six enormous ogive windows, on a line with the west front of the cathedral, and which is large enough to form a conspicuous portion of the whole pile as seen from any part of the neighbourhood. Five large statues in stone are placed on the buttresses which divide the façade; in the middle is St. Etienne, and to right and left St. Savinien and St. Potentien, first apostles of the country. Adjoining the cathedral is Pierre de Charny, under whom the hall was restored after the fall of the Tour de Pierre in 1267 (which ruined nearly all Archbishop Sevin's work), and on the opposite side is Louis IX. (St. Louis) on his knees. Under the hall are huge vaults—lighted in the inner court by strong barred windows,—and the awful prisons of the middle ages, into the lowest of which entrance can only be obtained by descending a ladder. Tradition says the condemned prisoners were let down by ropes.

Behind the hall, and due south of the cathedral, is the archevêché. The present actual abode of the archbishop, is a great pile (not deficient in a certain grandeur, though wholly wanting in sculptural detail), built in 1557 by Cardinal Louis de Bourbon. But far more beautiful are the remaining portions of a somewhat earlier date, which stand at right angles to the main dwelling, and were built by Archbishop Etienne Poncher, in 1520. His palace was rich in all the delicate ornamentation of the *renaissance*, the pilasters, cornices, and window frames were all wrought with the finest work of the age.

In the early part of this century, Etienne Poncher's archevêché stood entire, but much dilapidated, and the damp soaked through the walls. Monseigneur de Cosnac offered three thousand francs for making the most needed repairs, such as stopping the holes in the roof. This small sum would have sufficed to keep the beautiful and venerable building for some years from further

decay. The offer was refused, and demolition actually begun at a cost which would have preserved the fabric to posterity. Three-quarters of the first story were pulled down, and the finely-sculptured fragments lay for years scattered over the court; after which they were heaped one on another to make room for the new stones required in the reparation of the cathedral. The long low building which stretches down part of the Grande Rue, yet shows how lovely the edifice must have been; and entrance to the south transept door of St. Etienne is still gained by passing into the court through a beautiful little door of Etienne Poncher's, graced with luxuriant foliage and rich arabesques. Within is a small staircase-door, also adorned with sculpture, partly Gothic, partly of the *renaissance*; to the right of which are large windows divided by stone mullions, all equally rich. To the left is an elegant well; and in the days when architecture was a familiar art, wells offered an opportunity for beautiful ornamentation which we seem to have quite forgotten in these days.

It may perhaps seem spiteful to record that it was the year 1832 which brought about the demolition of half Etienne Poncher's *archevêché*. Decidedly the chief functionaries must have had a spite against the arts; they made of their beautiful Sens *une ruine habitée*, and the squares and promenades of the town were scattered over with immemorial stones and broken sculpture. It was probably because they thought it too insignificant that they spared a house wall in a street running into the Grande Rue, built by some enthusiastic inhabitant in 1547. He chiselled delicate little patterns up and down his door and windows, and round shields and panels; his device appears to have been three hearts and a hammer, and he sprinkled inscriptions in Greek and Latin to the effect that the best house was the house of friends, and that he dedicated his dwelling to—

Unus Deus et Plures Amici.

Ah! the pleasant days when men built their houses after their own minds, and wrote their own devices on the walls, and none laughed at them; when little wooden knights and saints peeped out from the angles of the gable-ended houses, and every street displayed a store of imaginative wealth. Many beautiful nooks and corners yet abound in the city of Sens; grey walls covered with golden wall-flowers, above which the Tour de Pierre is seen shooting up into the blue sky; and gardens where the wheeling pigeons whirl about with the great grey mass of the cathedral for a background; and river brinks where the poplars reflect themselves in the still flowing tide of the Vanne and the Yonne, intermingled with the spire or tower or softer image of the passing sail.

A peaceful place is the old city of Sens, in the green valley of the Yonne, and a glorious type of the Everlasting Home is its fair white cathedral; a place wherein to lay down with a glad heart the burden of past mistakes and past sorrows, and to await with prayer the dawning of a new life.

BESSIE R. PARKES.

## HUMANUS INHUMAN.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

“AS between man and man,” is or used to be the favourite synonym for fair dealing in the class mechanic; it may also be taken as expressing the extremest need for patience, the cultivation of that virtue being apparently the sole remaining use of society. Nobody talks of being bored in these days, it would be too obvious a truism. Also the bore proper is an indefinite existence, impalpable, with no angles and no sides, a shadow ghost; it is only when alloyed with certain human qualities that he gains substance and becomes tangible, then he is almost architectural in his solidity; in fact, the rough divisions of architecture would answer very well for the four primary orders of bore, viz., the Doric, or Noble-Savage bore; the Ionic, or smooth, I was about to say small, bore; the Corinthian, or ornate bore; and the Composite, or bewildering bore.

Snapshaw is not a bad specimen of Class I. He came down upon me just now with—“What a hideous picture you have there, Foozy!” knowing that I aim strenuously at “beauty, sweetness, and light;” but anything serves him for pabulum. He will bring out the *Court Circular*, saying, “Look here, ‘Divine service was performed last Sunday before the Queen, Prince Leopold, and Princess Beatrice.’ I hope they had a good view, and the performance went off well. The performers might have been nervous, you know.”

“You would be ever so much better looking if you gave up sneering,” I reply. It is one of the peculiarities common to all the species of bore that they are intensely assimilative; you assume their skin as the rabbit does the snake’s, with no possibility of maintaining a separate existence. As a rough test of this let anybody gaze in a full omnibus. I will give him ten minutes to collect eleven yawns, it will be quite enough. If there should be children or young lovers, half the time will probably suffice.

Snapshaw shines best by the side of the Ionic Mildew, who is rather the worse of the two. Snapshaw is quarrelsome, but Mildew won’t quarrel; which of course suggests that he does not consider us worth it. Anybody can look gentle in looking down; it is the upward gaze that frowns.

Mildew writes poems, so Snapshaw begins, “That last thing of yours is great rubbish.”

“So I thought,” said Mildew, with that air of unconscious arrogance which a cigar seems to give to the meekest of men, as a baby does to the meekest of women.

“Don’t you think so still?”

“Well, one is open to conviction; when a man takes the trouble to tell me he does not like a thing, I conclude that it has something in it. I don’t suppose anybody has told Miss Ingelow that her *Story of Doom* is twaddle.”

“The critics are all mad,” roared Snapshaw. He does a good deal by roaring.

“No, they are past that,” said Mildew, tranquilly.

“What then?”

"Dead! buried under a cairn of blunders."

"Success to their successors," cried Snapshaw, trying the other side; but Mildew was not to be poked up, he answered comfortably:

"They would do very well if only they would not praise anybody. Any fellow can find fault after a fashion; but when a fit of good-nature comes over them it is always for the wrong things in the wrong people. They go demented, like lions in love."

"You will be taken for a humorist some day if you are not careful," said Snapshaw.

"What is humour?" I asked.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mildew. "You might as well ask me what genius is."

"Yes," said Snapshaw, "or folly. Folly is folly, that is all you can say about it."

We seemed to be falling into unison, and if there is one thing more dreary than disputing with one's friends, it is agreeing with them. We instinctively separated.

These two are only bores as everybody is a bore. Not so our Corinthian member, Thomas Aquinas, commonly known as Quince; a gentleman so exceedingly fine, of such rare flavour, that he ought to be potted and spread out thin like shrimp paste, a little of him goes such a long way.

We first met in Brussels, where he was living *en prince*, by contract at six francs a day; quite enough too, considering that the bills were paid by his aunts, who kept a boarding-school near Bristol, which facts were proclaimed to the world at large one morning by an exasperated chamberman, to whose *fiancée* it seemed that Quince had been unduly polite. Poor Quince always was polite, only somehow nobody ever reciprocated him. In fact, such is the depravity of human, the perversity of feminine, nature, that women of all ranks would persist in taking his pretty speeches as insults; yet he always had the last new thing in pronunciation, his vagary at that time being to spell every word with an O, as thus, "Con oi poss yo' anything?" The relaxation of his throat must have been something fearful.

Brusquerie was not more successful. He always wore thin patent-leather boots, Brussels being paved with a special view to wooden soles, and in the effort to pick a clean path it often became necessary for him to kick a little child into the gutter. The ungrateful youngsters invariably fell with such a splash as sent the mud all over him, yet he never desisted from the practice. Such is the persistency of genius.

I suppose it must be a nice man that lives upon his aunts. Quince might have been a comfort to his but for that most nauseous of all affectations, the affectation of vice. He used to come down in the morning, with the rosy freshness of at least ten hours' good sleep upon him, and tell us that he had been gambling all night, and had lost so many louis. Somehow it was always louis and always in hundreds that his friends played. He had the not common desire, at least among young men of our day, to be thought very rich. You will hear five men boast of poverty for one who hints at riches.



But like most of the vagabond English in Brussels, he was always "going on" to *Schlafen*—something or other, to stay with some cousins of the Queen's. Our continental friends must certainly credit her Majesty with having as many poor relations as a successful tradesman; only they usually discount British bills social at a very different rate from British bills monetary.

Quince had another old-fashioned habit, that of using strong language—especially before ladies; but the same flaccidity of nature that made an occasional oath necessary to him seemed to render them harmless—one could not fancy even Satan taking the trouble to attend to them—unless, perhaps, in the *salle-à-manger*, where they acquired the intensity of utterances under torture, thus. This unhappy room was panelled with looking-glass of the old continental quality, whose reflections were rather more unflattering than photographs. I don't know that I could use a stronger expression. What havoc these mirrors made with Quince's digestion I am afraid to think. He who was always rouged, curled, and scented to perfection, used to go beyond that in his dinner-dress, and would come in bland and smiling, from a final glance at his pocket-mirror taken on the stairs. To see this serene content change to blank horror as he contemplated the distorted *vis-à-vis* staring at him from the opposite wall would have been a pleasant sight for a small Mephistopheles. The queer thing was that he never seemed to get used to it, but would be frantically endeavouring to improve himself all dinner-time day after day. The spectacle of his neighbours' equally damaged visages did not seem to afford him the consolation that might have been expected; but, as he said, with I fear a personal application, he "could never have supported the weight of ugliness that some men have to carry about with them." Alas, my Quince. I do not know him any more. It is a pity.

We parted on the road to Waterloo, that fitting penitentiary for blatant Britons. If ever the soul of Wellington got into Napoleon, it was when he planted those endless rows of poplars, like a regiment of martinets in single file. To my great relief the coach broke down near a little petrification of a village, and we were let loose. I strayed into a cottage that would have done for a Welsh interior, all dark oak and bright crockery-ware. On either side of the fire sat an old man and woman, both knitting; she with masculine firmness and decision, he with feminine feebleness and hesitancy (of course I never in all my life saw a woman hesitate at anything). I saw that he was paralyzed; but he looked up quickly, and said, in good though rather stiff English,

"Are you familiar with Westmoreland?"

"Not at all," I answered, with as much of the energy of astonishment as remained to me after a long course of the Composite, or bewildering bore. This was evidently a specimen. He gave a sigh of relief.

"You are the first in all these years who has not replied 'Yes.' I had no idea when I left it that ours was such a prominent county."

"Travelling Englishmen have always been everywhere," I said. "I asked one the other day if he knew Mount Tycho (in the moon, you know). He said, 'Oh yes, quite well, he had been up it last summer.'"

My Composite went on excitedly, "Now I can tell you how it is that I am here."

Of course I did not in the least care how he came there; but people always will give other people credit for such wide sympathies. I bowed, and he began:

"It is ever since the battle."

"What battle?" I said.

"Why *the* battle," he answered, with indignant wonder.

"But you must have been mummified; that was ages ago, before anybody was born."

"I am an old, old man. I was then a young ensign, full of ardour and courage, intending to rejoice my family with pride in me; yet from that day I have buried myself. It is better that they should believe me dead. At the first confusion of slaughter, I, who speak to you, I—ran away."

"A-i-e," broke in the old woman; "a most sen-si-ble deed. I would that all soldiers do so, and leave the tyrant ruler agape for vengeance."

"Julie!" said the other, reproachfully. "To me my deed was so heinous that this paralysis which came on me before I had passed two fields seemed the judgment on my vileness. Now I would rather hold it as the cause thereof; but we are old ere we can judge even ourselves fairly. I crawled to this very cottage, where Julie there, my nurse in all these years, was mourning father and lover slain in a skirmish some days before. Do you believe in affinities, sir?"

"Yes," I said; "only I think they are generally all on one side."

"Well, she in her young desolation was thirsting for some one to be kind to. She found me and kept me. And when to silence the village scandal I thought it might be better for her to marry even such a thing as I was, she would not, solely for this, that she hoped to cure me. And then she said, what should I do with Julie for a wife in England? Like a woman, was it not?"

"A-i-e," laughed old Julie again, relishing the troubles of her youth as though they had been those of a grandchild. "The people would not speak to me, and the priest he say, 'Julie,' he say, 'your lodger must go, or you will be rremove from the church.' 'Well,' I say, 'when I go to heaven the blessed Saint Peter will ask me, 'Julie, why you not a good Catholic?' and I shall say, 'Ah, your reverence, you have the whole world, and this poor man have only Julie, so she give herself to him.' I thought I was done for myself then, but the good father he take my part ever after. So strange is men!"

The old man went straight on like one who relates a dream. "So if you, sir, will tell me where to send word when I am dead, perhaps you will kindly let my family know?"

I don't much care for messages from dead people; besides, I thought they always knew where to find one. But of course it would not do to anger a possible ghost; there was nothing to be done but take charge of his papers and promise what he asked. I don't in the least know whether his story was true, nor why he should have told it to me if it wasn't. I only know that he was emphatically a bewildering bore.



## GRUMPIBUS AND THE CEREUS.

FAYLANDS CASTLE stood in beautiful grounds and gardens where every forest tree and every flower grew and blossomed. The old keep was surrounded by a moat, now dry and covered with soft greensward, where it was always shady; and when the moon was shining a tribe of fairies who lived in the park and visited the gardens, used often to come and dance there. The place when I saw it was all covered with fairy rings, for the grass never grows the same colour in the ring where the fairies have danced on it.

Old Dr. Ortolan who came down to visit the chaplain, told the gatekeeper that these rings were nothing more than the marks of a sort of fungus which began with one, then cast its seed which would only grow in fresh ground, and so each crop going further out from the place where it started, made rings which widened and widened till they lost themselves. But Joe the gatekeeper winked his eye knowingly, and said no one would believe this who had seen the fairies dancing in the moonlight, and the rings next day.

Lubin Twinkle was lying half asleep among the fern, now closing his eyes, now looking straight up into the sky where the fleecy clouds sailed quietly through the deep, then watching the fallow deer butting each other, when turning on his side he saw just before his face the fairy queen's palace. The tall fern that covered him opened into a long avenue, where the stems all seemed to form the columns of a miniature cathedral. The leaves were joined at the ends with beautiful little groups of wild flowers, and each division exactly like the other. Lubin never could tell how long it was; but of this he was certain, that it grew less and less in the distance, and through the last arch he saw the village church, and the murmur of its bells sounded on his ear. Often he has tried to find the place, and crossed and recrossed the fern in every direction, careful not to break in the leafy roof or cast down the frail pillars; but he never again saw the fairy hall nor heard the church bells ring as they were ringing then.

He learned something about the fairies, however, which I never saw written anywhere. All the fairies we read of are either very young and beautiful, doing all sorts of odd good things, or very old and ugly, with wands like a crutch, never so well pleased as when they are doing mischief. Now it is true that the great apes are very kind and good when they are young, and grow fierce and dangerous as they get old; but why this should be, or why the old fairy should get ill-natured, I do not understand. However, Lubin saw not merely little baby fairies, who could not fly, trying to climb up the stems of the fern, while their mothers fluttered over them and held them by their wings for leading strings for fear they should fall, but fairies of all ages—fat little gentlemen fairies in pea-green coats and yellow waistcoats, sitting in easy chairs reading newspapers; one was leaning against a fern stem smoking a pipe, while an active little manikin was giving directions for keeping the roof in repair to workmen and workwomen fairies, who weather-proofed it by constantly twisting in fresh leaves.

The queen herself sat in the very middle of the hall upon a round throne covered with scarlet velvet and heaped with natural flowers, when Lubin saw a fairy in a white wig and black gown come bowing and scraping at a great rate to the foot of the throne. The queen lightly bounded into the air, and danced down gracefully on her feet, when a whole guard of fairies removed the flowers and the velvet from her throne, and exposed to Lubin's astonished eyes a blue china teacup without a handle, turned upside down. You may laugh, but the fact is, china was so much stronger than anything the fairies could make for themselves, that happening to find the broken teacup in the park, that very little man with a wig who came bowing to the queen resolved to make a state prison of it, that all fairies who offended against the laws might be put under it; and the queen was so much pleased to think she had got all her troublesome subjects shut up so safely, that she made the bottom of the teacup her throne, and sat upon it.

You would expect that the queen, when she wanted to let any one out, would give the teacup a tap with her wand and out they would come. Ah dear! the poor fairies would have been spared some very hard work if she had done so. Lubin saw fifty at least of them passing their wands in under the edge of the cup, and at last they lifted it high enough for one fairy to creep out of it. A miserable creature he looked. If fairies had chimneys you would have said he was the chimneysweep.

But how came he in such a mess, and how came he under the teacup? I'll tell you. The fairies think it very wicked for any one to enjoy alone a pleasure he might share with the others. Does any one skimming along the meadows light on the first bloom upon the rye, home he goes to the fairy hall and invites his companions to enjoy it, and out they troop by hundreds to the softest grass or the sweetest flowers that any one of them can find. Nay, so carefully do they observe this law, that never does a fairy find anywhere a very comfortable nook or corner, but before he sits down he goes to tell a little sister or brother where to find him.

Now the prisoner was a fairy called Grumpibus, and the night before he had got into trouble. He had been flying about among the flowers in the hot-house, many of which were beautiful, but none so very new or fragrant that he felt he ought to call the other fairies to the treat, when as the evening came on and the windows were going to be shut he set off to return home. But the air already felt cold outside the hot-house, and as he lighted upon the top of the flue he found a warm soft air coming from it, for the fires had burned to clear ashes and made no smoke. "How comfortable!" said Grumpibus, as he crept inside the chimney pot. "I won't go home till morning. This shall be my country seat, and I won't tell anybody for fear they should all come and I should not have room." So he stretched out his legs as wide as he could, and put his hands into his pockets, to see how much room he could take up. Once or twice he thought he ought to go and report the snug corner he had found out. Lucky for him it would have been if he had, for other fairies knew more about that corner than Grumpibus.

So after taking up all the room he could, Grumpibus fell fast asleep in the corner of the chimney pot, and knew not how long he had been there, when



the gardener came round to look at the stoves, and taking a shovel of small coal he threw it upon each of the fireplaces. Up mounted into the air a thick black smoke, and pouring into the chimney pot nearly suffocated Grumpibus. It made him so black that when he flew away in a fright, to the fairy hall his own mother did not know him, but thought it must be one of the black gnomes out of the coal mine who had been sent up on some business. Being a suspicious person, however, a fairy in a blue coat with a shiny top to his hat, who was the policeman to the palace, soon caught hold of him, and without hearing a word he had to say for himself put him under the teacup. Tittipro, for that was the little officer's name in the white bag wig, was still bowing before the queen, and when Grumpibus came out so black and dingy she turned to him to hear the story. He had not a word to say for himself, so the queen graciously said, "Since you have passed the night under the teacup, I shall inflict no further punishment upon you." Then turning to Tittipro, she said, "Let four washerwomen take their mops and go down to the rivulet, and see if they can get him clean and fit to come into our hall again." At a word the four laundresses who had the charge of the queen's own linen were on the spot. Two took two mops, two took scrubbing brushes, and they mopped and scrubbed at Grumpibus till he roared aloud—at last they got him clean.

Very hard, thought Grumpibus, that when a fairy has found anything comfortable he must not keep it to himself. "I will though, that I will," said he, and from that time he used to go about very much alone,—poking bits of stick into the bee-hives at night, and flying away before the bees were disturbed, thus spoiling a comb of honey that he might suck the end of the stick. Then perhaps he would get into a dairy, and seating himself on the edge of a bowl that was to stand for cream, he would stir it up with his wand; and that he called making a storm. Then if some poor industrious spider had spent all the day in making a new web, Grumpibus would jump into the middle of it, draw it out into one long cord and swing on it for half an hour, then fly away, little thinking of the disappointment he had caused the spider. The least pleasure for himself he always thought more of than the greatest trouble to any one else. At last he found a great pleasure, and he enjoyed it all alone.

Few fairies of that county had ever seen the night-blooming cereus in flower. The wonderful things that were told of its sweet scent and its beauty everybody knew in fairyland, and many a wee heart sighed—"Oh if I might but see the night-blooming cereus." Now just beside the hothouse, in a little chamber kept locked up, there was one of these rare plants, and Grumpibus heard from something said by the gardener, that it would certainly flower that year. Well, thought Grumpibus, if I find when this cereus flowers, and tell the fairies, they will certainly make friends with me again. And he was always fluttering about this spot till he found a small ventilator through which he could creep, and at night he got in and slept under the cereus leaves, impatiently waiting till he should see the bud burst.

The head gardener used to visit the bud twice every night, and the second gardener did the same. At last it flowered. Away ran the head gardener to

call up his master, away ran the second gardener to call the others, and Grumpibus was left alone in the little chamber. That was his hour of trial! The scent was most delicate, and he thought how nice to have it all to himself: the cup of the flower enchanted him, he could not leave it. "No," he said, "this once I will have it all to myself, and be the only fairy in the land that has seen the flower of the cereus." So saying he curled himself up in the very middle of the flower, bewildered with beauty, overpowered with fragrance. In fact the scent was so strong that very soon the fairy fainted, and forgot everything.

He would assuredly have been caught and kept under a wine glass to show the company at the castle, but fortune favoured him. The head gardener, who had been earnestly told by the lord of the castle to have him called immediately when the cereus flowered, went and rang at the gate. The porter was asleep; but when he had rubbed his eyes and taken his pocket-handkerchief off his head he looked through a little slit in the gate, and asked what the gardener wanted. On being told he rang a great bell, which nobody answered, and went to sleep again. And when the head gardener grew quite impatient he gave the bell another pull, when the groom of the chambers slowly dressed himself and came to see what was the matter. When he was made to understand, he said it was the chambermaid's business, so he rang another bell, and the chambermaid dressed herself and came. So in about an hour and a half the lord was waked up, and his lady, who begged him to wait for her; and then her maid was waked and had to dress, and she dressed my lady in pink taffeta and an India shawl; and then it began to rain, so the coachman was waked to get the carriage, and he had to wake the horses, and by the time they got to the conservatories the flower had shut up, and nothing but a faint disagreeable smell remained to say that a cereus had flowered and died.

The cold flabby leaves of the flower closed over Grumpibus, and how many nights and days he may have lain in that condition he never knew. But this is certain, that when the gardener cleared away the dead flowers he cut off the cereus and threw it into his barrow, and so wheeled it away with the rubbish to the dunghill. Soon after the stable-man came and emptied his barrow in the same place, and poor Grumpibus, buried alive, could neither move hand nor foot nor wing. What added to the misery of his case was that he was completely soaked with the black liquor of the dunghill.

And there he might have lain till now, but one day he heard in his noisome prison his old friend the head gardener say to the hind, "Just have this dung carried down to the long meadow." And that very afternoon came a cart and two men who began to pitch up the manure into the cart. Anxiously the poor fairy waited for the shovelful that should contain his own prison chamber. His almost broken heart bounded at the thought how he would fly out the moment his spadeful was going up into the air. At last the man came to him, he stuck in the spade, he felt himself thrown up, but the mass did not break, and the poor fairy fell into the dung cart as much a prisoner and as bruised and miserable as he could be. However this part of his sorrow was nearly ended, when they emptied the cart in the field and spread

the dressing he crept out, and running rapidly along one of the furrows, came to a beautiful clear stream. Instantly he jumped in to wash himself, and scrubbed away with a good will, but to his surprise he got no cleaner.

He stopped for a minute to wonder why he was not more successful, when he heard a little tench close by say to an old one who lay with one eye just peeping out from under a stone in the bottom of the stream, "Why, doctor, what a time that fairy has been washing himself!"

"Ay, and he may wash," replied the doctor; "I am afraid it's the colour of his wretched heart that has come through his skin, and there's no way of washing that off that I know of."

Angry and mortified, the fairy scrambled out of the water, afraid to go home to fairy hall again in such filthy plight, and afraid to get into the streamlet because he did not like to hear the fishes talk about him.

So Grumpibus kept running on by the side of the brook as fast as he could, until bearing round the stump of an old oak that grew among the willows, who should he come upon but the queen of the fairies, and the lord chancellor, high chamberlain, commander of the forces, and physician in ordinary, all come a-gipsying, and having despatched their meal were playing at hunt the slipper. They all gave a shout when dirty Grumpibus, not seeing where he was going, ran into the ring. The commander-in-chief drew his sword and vowed he would chop him up into sausage-meat. The lord chancellor declared he must go under the teacup, or suffer as the law directs. But the doctor, looking at his deplorable complexion between brown and blue, said he was only fit for the hospital—he had never known but one case like it, and that was a fairy who got poisoned by the smell of a decayed cereus.

Grumpibus no sooner heard the word than he felt as if all was found out. Oh! thought he, what a wretched being I have been this last year! I am only fit to live under a teacup. And throwing himself down, and weeping before the queen, he cried, "I know I am a disgrace to fairyland. I have always been keeping pleasure to myself, and now I have not told of the night-flowering cereus." And then he told all his sin and punishment. How he had been overpowered by the perfume, and then poisoned by the decaying flower, and buried in the dunghill, and carted to the field; and how the old tench knew that was not all, but a wicked heart made the stain deepest.

And as he lay sobbing in convulsions at her feet he thought, Oh, if I could be good and kind, and think of others as well as myself, how happy I should be! I will—that I will. Poor black little creature as I am, I will try and do all the kindness I can to every one wherever I wander, and try to be loved for my goodness since I never can be admired for my beauty. He said nothing. The queen feared he was dying. The doctor felt his pulse, but the queen spoke kindly to him, and said, "Poor selfish Grumpibus, you have been already punished enough; get up and go and hide yourself, for I fear you will never be fit to dance in our fairy rings again." But Grumpibus was a changed creature. Two fairies crossed their arms and carried him to the hospital, where the physician blistered and bled him, and gave him all sorts of draughts and pills; but the thought of his past misconduct was the bitterest draught of all. And as the little nurses in mob caps came

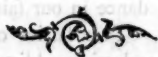
to look after him with anxious faces, they told him how the queen and the lord chancellor and the commander-in-chief had been to inquire after him. Unworthy that I am, thought Grumpibus, how shall I ever repay all their kindness?

Next morning the nurse brought him some hot water and a razor to shave himself, and make himself a little tidy, when to his great astonishment he saw that his skin was growing fair again, and his wings had begun to glitter. He shaved with great glee, and began tumbling head over heels, and playing all sorts of tricks on his bed; but a fairy in the next bed with a broken wing sighed out, "Oh, how I wish to be quiet!" Grumpibus was still in a moment; and when the nurse brought him some oatmeal porridge for his dinner, she put on her spectacles, and said, "Why, Mr. Grumpibus, you are growing quite handsome." "Thank ye, ma'am," said he; and he was more pleased at the feeling of the old fairy's kindness in wishing to please him than at the thought that he was indeed getting less horrid. However, next morning, when they brought him the shaving-glass and hot water, he saw that, sure enough, he was a better-looking fairy than he had ever been before. And the queen, who at this time came to see how he was going on, really did not know him.

"Grumpibus," said she, "you shall begin the world again. You are so changed no one will ever know you; and the doctor says that you have just been cured of a disease of the heart. I will give you a new name and call you Amabel. You shall come out this very night and dance with me in the castle moat when the moon comes through the beech trees; and we will forget you ever were selfish or unkind, for I think you will be so no more."

There was a light wind in the beech trees, and their many twinkling leaves made all the castle moat alive as the moonlight fell fitfully on the close-mown sward. Old Joe was going round to see that all was safe when, leaning over the low battlement, there he saw the whole troop flying about in all sorts of figures, while Amabel and the queen led the dance. Away he ran, a little frightened, to the gate-house, which was close by where Dr. Ortolan slept on his visits, and called as loud as he could, "Dr. Ortolan, Dr. Ortolan, the fairies are all out dancing—come down, Dr. Ortolan. There they are, all just under your window." Dr. Ortolan jumped up in his shirt, opened the casement, and put out his head. But he wore a scarlet nightcap, and when he looked out not a fairy could he see. "Where are they gone, old goose?" said the doctor. "There, don't you see them?" said Joe. But neither he nor Joe could see them any more. That red nightcap must have frightened them all away.

V. E.



## A GAME OF THIMBLERIG.

FROM the age of seventeen to three or four and twenty, most young fellows think a great deal of themselves, much more than they ever do afterwards; but the worst point in this fact is, that their conceit is generally displayed upon such subjects as they are least acquainted with. Parents of stern dissenting tendencies, as mine were, have the habit of keeping a tight hand on their offspring, so that should any wild blood exist in their veins, it asserts itself outrageously on the first opportunity which freedom gives it. A lad of seventeen, who has never been out alone after dark, and who suddenly finds himself master of his own actions five hundred miles from home, is likely, if not of a timid nature, to consider himself a very important and wide-awake gentleman, quite capable of taking care of himself and his affairs.

Thus, when an accident placed me in this position, tied as I had hitherto been to my mother's apron-strings, it is not very surprising that I got into a scrape. A scrape, however, that in the long run was of the greatest possible service to me and several dear and valued friends.

This is how it happened. My father and mother lived at Stork House, Clapham Common, and I, an only child, was carefully and rigidly educated, but entirely at home, first by my mother, then by a governess, and eventually by a tutor. I was far too precious an object to be committed to the rough handling of a private, much less a public school.

In spite of this training, I was very precocious. Though I never openly rebelled, I had very high spirits, and, if I may say it of myself, I think I was not a milksop. Many manly tendencies that I might naturally have had, though suppressed as being rough and vulgar by my earliest preceptors, were fostered in a measure by my tutor. I say in a measure, because even he was so trammelled by the religious prejudices of the house, that he dared not give me the benefit of many innocent and instructive pursuits and occupations. In our intercourse apart from study, he, however, a thorough gentleman and man of the world, gave me the advantage of much of his wide-spread and diversified experience, all of which set me bitterly longing for the time when I should be able to do this or that, free from the supervision of papa or mamma. I had but few companions of my own age, but of these the principal were two brothers named Branston, sons of a neighbour and friend of my father's. The liberty of action, however, accorded to them set many a barrier between our close intimacy. A desire to see for myself those pictures of life which were presented to me through their conversation, was the chief result of our intercourse. The stables at Stork House were well filled, and the management of horses was about the only liberal pursuit that I was allowed to indulge in; but it must not be imagined from this circumstance that the slightest element of sport was associated with it. Racing was never for a moment to be mentioned; indeed, when the Epsom week came round, all the blinds were studiously drawn down in the front of our house, which faced the great high road to the downs, while none but the back rooms were used.



It was held to be little short of a crime for any of the inmates to show themselves in the garden and shrubbery which lay between the dwelling and the road. Oh, the longing at first to be allowed to see, and latterly to join in that jolly rollicking throng, as through the windows the shouts and noise of the jovial revellers reached me!

I frequently managed to elude the laws of the house and gain a peep at the exciting scene of "the road" through the thick holly hedge bordering the shrubbery above mentioned. Latterly I had made a habit of this. I remember well that it was on a Derby day, and just before the great homecoming crowd was at its thickest, that from my little point of observation, cunningly selected so as to be unseen from house or road, I noticed a group of men collect just under the hedge where I was. One of these men sat down on the bank, placing a small square board on his lap, producing at the same time three thimbles and one little pea, which he began to move about dexterously on the board, now disclosing, now hiding the pea with the thimbles, uttering in the most voluble manner the whole while a jargon quite new to my youthful ears. The other men instantly began to bet in a noisy manner as to which thimble the pea was under. A crowd gathered round them, and I became an excited spectator of the art and mystery of "thimblrig."

In those days this ingenious and instructive amusement was an accompaniment to every raceground and its vicinity, winked at, if not absolutely encouraged, with many other abominations, by the law. Of its swindling blackguardism I then knew nothing; and, in my innocence, as I gazed on the scene, I was chiefly struck by the stupidity, as it seemed to me, of the bystanders in not at once detecting under which thimble the pea rested at the conclusion of the shuffle.

I longed every now and then to give the necessary hint of where I felt sure it must be. With great difficulty I restrained myself from doing so. Only at rare intervals did any of the crowd make a right guess, and win the stake, whilst in my knowingness I fancied I could have won every time. Not for the money's sake, for that I cared nothing; it was about the only thing at Stork House in which there was liberality, for we were very rich, and I might break the knees of a pony that had cost my father eighty guineas yesterday, and he would present me with another to-morrow worth a hundred, with scarcely a murmur of disapprobation. No, I wanted to win for the sake of winning, for the sake of showing how clever and sharp I was, and I became irritated to a degree at not being in a position to prove my superiority over the crowd of idiots, as I deemed them, at my feet. Often after this I beheld a similar scene, but it is needless almost to say that from the prejudices of my home I was obliged to keep all these experiences to myself; nevertheless they dwelt in my mind and brought their result.

In the autumn of the year in which I reached my seventeenth birthday, it was arranged, by the advice of my tutor, that I should go for a tour through Scotland with him. He had persuaded my parents, with considerable difficulty it is true, that "home-keeping youths have ever homely wits;" but the confidence reposed in Mr. Tuxford was very great, and after many discussions,

and assurances on his part that he would take every care of me, my first excursion free from the parental guard was settled. Mr. Tuxford had relations in the north, whither he started for the beginning of his holiday alone. The railway was just open to Perth, at which fair city I was to meet him, for he had shown there was no difficulty in my reaching that distant spot by myself, seeing that I could be put into a carriage at Euston Square, which would go right through to my destination without a change; indeed if it were necessary I could be locked in. I remember his saying this with a slight touch of irony, an objection being raised by my mother about distance, etc.

Family affairs kept the anxious parents in the neighbourhood of London that autumn, or I firmly believe to this day the arrangement would never have been entered upon. As it was, I was consigned one evening, almost with a label round my neck, to the charge of the guard of the night mail train for the north, with many injunctions, under which I fretted, and which I was ashamed my fellow-passengers should hear; and after a journey which amused and excited me tremendously, I reached Perth at four o'clock the following afternoon. From the moment the train moved out of the London station I felt the dignity of my position. Possessed of twenty pounds, I was for the first time in my life alone, and master, at least for some twenty hours, of my own actions.

Every detail and necessity of my journey had been calculated, and the time of my arrival at its various points conned over at home. Mr. Tuxford was expected to be standing on the platform at Perth, awaiting the arrival of the train, to cast around me the halo of his protection; but to my infinite satisfaction he was nowhere to be seen, so after a reasonable time had elapsed I secured my baggage, and drove off with the airs of a count to the hotel agreed upon as our resting place.

At its doors I was asked if my name were not Elton, and on an answer in the affirmative, a letter from my tutor was delivered to me. He merely said that it would be more convenient for him to go across country, and pick me up at Dunkeld, whither the mail would start the next morning from the inn. He added, "I do not think you will be nervous at having to perform this extra piece of journey by yourself; there can be no difficulty for you, or I would not have allowed anything to interfere with our original plan. Go direct to the Athol Arms, and if I have not arrived, order dinner at seven, by which hour I will be with you without fail; our rooms are already secured."

Glorious! Complete independence for at least another twenty-four hours! I need not detail the various modes by which I asserted my dignity. Enough that I thought I did so to perfection, and the following afternoon I found myself on the seat of the "Well-horse," Perth and Inverness day mail-coach, as it dashed over the old bridge, and pulled up at the Athol Arms, Dunkeld.

My preceptor had not arrived (here was a further respite from control), but I carried out his instructions respecting the dinner, and without any very definite purpose, strolled on to the picturesque bridge which crosses the Tay at this point. Though not of a reflective habit, nor particularly impressible by the beauties of nature, I yet could not fail to be struck by the quiet charm of the scene before me. Looking up the stream that came tumbling along its

rocky channel with a refreshing sound falling on the summer air, I had the thick pine woods of the Duke of Athol's estate on my right, behind which the afternoon light was beginning to redden, whilst a high road following the windings of the stream led enticingly away under towering trees into the distance on my left.

Reading, walking, and sketching were to be our chief occupations. Tuxford would fish probably, and I looked forward with keenness to being initiated into the angler's art. But there had been a tacit understanding between ourselves that such worldly pursuits were best not touched on at Clapham. They could only lead to a discussion which would probably end in their interdiction.

Some two hundred yards up the stream was a disciple of Izaak Walton's, whipping away with his line one of the many deep still pools of the river. In theory I knew all about fly-fishing, but this was the first time I had ever seen it practised. A desire to get a closer view of his proceedings induced me to cross the bridge and follow for a short distance the road just referred to. I had gone but a few yards along it when I heard a hastening step behind me, and a rather showily-dressed man came briskly up, saying, "I think that fellow has hooked a big fish, we can see him from this bank, come along!" and he broke into a run as he passed on. Excited by this remark, I followed him at the same pace. He dashed into a copse lying between the road and river, and in another minute we were in full view of the capture which ensued of a very fine trout. Depositing the prize in his basket, the fisherman went yet a little higher up the stream, and turned his attention to other pools, but now with no success. Watching him for a considerable time from the bank where we had seated ourselves, my companion chatted on agreeably enough, first about the sport of fly-fishing, with which it struck me he did not appear to be very well acquainted, though he spoke somewhat boastfully of his many successes in the art, and then descanted upon the surrounding localities. With these he was evidently more familiar.

"Been to the Rumbling Bridge?" he asked. "Stunning place that—one of the lions of these parts—seen it perhaps?"

"No, I have only just arrived."

"Oh! indeed—ah! it was you I saw get off the box of the mail just now. I did not twig you at first. Bound north, I suppose?"

"Yes," I said, hesitatingly; "I am expecting to meet a man here this evening, with whom I am going to walk."

"Ah! very enjoyable thing. I am on my way up into Sutherlandshire; a great friend of mine, Sir Percy Binks, has got a moor there this year—wants me to shoot over it. My regiment is at Dublin, and as I've got a month's leave, I'm going. You shoot, of course?"

Now, somehow I felt my dignity slipping from under me in presence of this man, and that I could not afford, so I did not hesitate to preserve it at all hazards, and after an instant's hesitation I replied in my most self-confident tone,

"Oh, yes, a great deal when I'm at home."

"Live in the south no doubt?" he went on. "They tell me birds will be very scarce this year. How are they with you?"

"Oh! plenty of them about us," I replied; but I hoped he would not continue this topic much further, for lying was not my habit, yet I was afraid my importance could not be preserved if I did not resort to it. His remarks, however, here took a turn which was still worse for me to contend against. He pulled a case from the breast-pocket of his shooting-coat, took from it a cigar, offering me one at the same time.

"Have a weed?" said he; "no doubt you smoke?"

Would to heaven I had achieved that manly habit, but I dared not trust myself. I knew Tuxford must discover it, and worse, I knew it would make me ill; for a year back only I had essayed to smoke the half of a cigar that had been given me by one of my Clapham companions to whom I have alluded, and an afternoon of intense agony in a remote cowshed in our meadow was the result. I therefore declined my new-found friend's civility with the excuse that I was just going to dinner.

"Dinner!" he said, "why what time is it? My watch has stopped; you've got one, let me see," and he made a movement as if he were going to take it from my pocket, but glancing at the hour myself, he withdrew his hand, while I replied, "A little past five."

"Why, what time do you dine? Not before seven, do you? Well, never mind, if you won't smoke, let's have a walk; that fellow won't take any more fish to-night," said he, rising as he spoke. "Let us stroll on to the Rumbling Bridge. I know the way, it's not far; beautiful evening, and you've lots of time."

With a sense of relief, from his not pressing his cigar upon me, I hailed with alacrity the idea of thus filling up the interval before dinner.

Now I knew from the guide-book that there were two ways of getting to the Rumbling Bridge from Dunkeld: one over the hills on the right bank of the Tay, the other by the road on the left, where we were. My companion urged that we should go by the hills, as it was by far the prettier route. I contended that as evening was coming on, we had better stick to the road, and he unwillingly assented, saying, "Well, we can go one way, and come home by the other."

As we walked, his tongue never ceased rattling, and though much amused by him, I could not help fancying that he now and then used expressions new to me, and clipped his words in a way that I had never heard before. But what was not new to me in those days! Still, to inexperienced eyes, there was nothing objectionable in his appearance: a little horsey perhaps, but my associations with the stable had reconciled me to this, for despite my education, a secret love for sport had grown up within me. My talkative friend wore a thick dark moustache and whiskers, then by no means so common an appendage as now; but having spoken of his regiment, I knew of course that as an officer he was privileged to wear them, and mightily proud I felt of my association with the service. He had rather a good-looking face, sharp black eyes, slightly aquiline nose, with a figure not very tall, but broad-shouldered and thick set. As I have hinted, he was showily dressed, with a profusion of jewellery, and a startling amount of rings was displayed on his large red hands. Poor simpleton that I was! an officer, indeed! could I have beheld

him with eyes but a few years older I should have thought him as much like an Esquimaux as one of the high-bred gentlemanly officers of her Majesty's army.

We had by this time reached a turn in the road, which brought us under the shadow of the surrounding hills.

It was a gloomy, solitary place, particularly in the waning autumn evening light. Halting here, my companion remarked, "There's no end of an echo in this place let's try it;" and putting the knuckles of his two first fingers to his mouth, he sent forth a shrill whistle, which echoed backwards and forwards very faintly for a second or two. It was a very low taste, I dare say, but I wish to disguise nothing, and often had I longed to accomplish this feat, with which my observations of the Derby highway had made me familiar, and I gazed with admiration on the performer. He repeated the whistle sharply three times, and I fancied that the echo of the last seemed louder, unnatural, and a little out of time. "Very good, isn't it?" he said, and we continued our way. Hardly any one was about; a few farm labourers close to Dunkeld were the only people we had met, but a little farther on sat an old gentleman quietly reading by the bank of the river. He was of reverend appearance, with white neckcloth, broad-brimmed hat, and spectacles, but he did not seem to notice us as we passed. The Rumbling Bridge was reached; it was a likely looking place for fishing, but beyond this it did not impress me, for I was far too much engrossed by the entertaining gossip of my new acquaintance. The return route was again a matter of much discussion between us; but as my internal sensations told me that dinner-time was approaching, I insisted on keeping to the road, as the shorter way home, to which, after much parleying, my companion reluctantly assented. His temper was a little ruffled, but he recovered in the course of a few minutes, and was soon rattling on as pleasantly as ever. Just before we arrived at the bend of the road where the echo was, I thought I saw in the distance a man crossing the river from the other side by the aid of some stepping stones; but a promontory of rock cut him off from my view almost as soon as I had sighted him. I therefore took no notice of this trivial circumstance; but it had its significance, I found, when I had time to reflect on what followed.

"Hallo! what are those chaps up to?" was the sudden and surprised observation of my companion, as, in a few minutes, we wound round the solitary spot where he had excited my admiration by his whistle. "Oh, here's a lark! thimblorig by jingo!" Then stopping suddenly, and placing his hand affectionately on my arm, he said, "Now, you'll excuse me, but you are a nice young fellow, and I've taken a kind of fancy to you, I shouldn't like you to come to harm while you was with me, but p'r'aps I've seen a little bit more of the world than you. Now that's as rascally a plant as ever I came across."

"What's a plant?" said I, betrayed for a moment by curiosity out of my assumed knowingness. He replied, smiling,

"Why, don't you see that fellow is trying to hook a couple of flats? One



of them is that old parson cove that we passed just now while he was reading, and the sharper has laid out his little game to catch just such chaps as him. Come along, we'll have some fun with 'em."

Sure enough, as I looked where he pointed, there in this unlikely place I saw the "little game" going on, with which as a spectator I have shown I was familiar.

"Don't you be afraid," continued my worthy guide; "you come and put your money down like a man, and I'll be bound you go home richer than you came. I'm up to the rig, and have won pots at it in my time; could do it myself once; perfectly safe when you know it."

We were now approaching within a dozen yards of the knot of three men, from whom I could hear proceeding the usual jargon. Here was an opportunity indeed not to be resisted of showing my cunning, and indulging for the first time in my sporting propensities. Moreover, could I not rely on the assistance of the friendly man of the world, who, by his knowledge of the game, had shown me he was wide awake? Go in and win! of course I would. Nothing would please me better, and I entirely forgot in this excitement the qualms of hunger which the beauties of the Rumbling Bridge had failed to stifle.

"Here you are, with your one, two, three, and your three, two, one, three thimbles and one little pea; Lor' bless your soul, I wuldn't tell ye a lie for all the money, but I'll lay either o' you gents five, ten, fifteen, or an even twenty sovereigns you don't tell me which thimble the pea is under. If the 'and is quicker than the h'eye, why I win, and you lose; but if the h'eye is quicker than the 'and, why you win and I lose, &c., &c." And the shuffle is concluded, and the thimbles stationary at the moment we join the group.

"A sovereign it's under this," says one of the lookers-on, a square-built dark man, really not very unlike my companion in appearance. As he speaks, he tips over with his finger a thimble,—there is no pea.

"I told you 'twas not that, sir," continued the other bye-stander, who was indeed the same reverend-looking gentleman with white neckcloth, spectacles, and broad-brimmed hat, that I had noticed seated on the bank.

"Never mind," says the owner of the board, resuming the shuffle, "win it back this time, sir," as the loser hands over the stake.

Again a slight oration, and once more the thimbles come to a standstill.

"Now, sir, you try your luck," to the clerical gentleman, who replies in a soft, bland voice,

"Thank you, no, I never bet; but I am amused to see the dexterity you display."

"Just as you like, sir, there ain't no harm in looking, a cat may look at a king. P'raps one o' you gents (to us) would like to try your fortune?" and the thimbles are again rattling rapidly over the little table, and again the shuffle ceases.

"There," said my friend, turning to him who had just lost, "now you can win it back again safe as a gun," and advances his hand.

"No, no, don't touch 'em," says the owner. "Which gent is a-going to bet, let me understand?"

"Why, neither now, I should think," says he who had first lost the money; "you've moved them again."

"No, I haven't!"

"But I say you have; hasn't he, sir?" appealing to my friend, who replies, "Rather!"

"Now, gentlemen, pray do not quarrel," interposes the clerical spectator.

"Well, I don't want to deceive no one; now keep your eyes open. There's the pea, there it ain't! Now, be quick, look alive, it's only h'eye against 'and! There! now who's going to say which thimble it's under?" and the movement is once more stopped. My friend and the other shout simultaneously,

"I'll bet a fiver it's this!"

"Done," says the owner. "Now hands off, hands off," and a wrangle again ensues; but the thimbles are not this time touched. "Now, sir," to me, "you see fair, you lift up the thimble when these gents has put their money down." The five-pound notes are produced, and I am directed by the two sportsmen to raise a particular thimble, which I do; sure enough the pea is under it!

"There, I told you so," they exclaimed, and he of the table at once hands over five sovereigns to my friend, and a five-pound note to the other player. "All fair, gents—quite right—there's your money—now try again."

My friend whispers to me, "Now *you* have a go in this time; don't be afraid, I'll put you on the right one."

The proceeding is repeated, I stake my money—two sovereigns. This time our reverend companion is asked to raise the thimble that my friend indicates for me.

"Right again; you've won your money, sir!"

So I have, I am actually two pounds to the good. I am delighted; I was quite sure of winning, there could be no doubt. So the scene proceeds for a considerable time. It is now getting almost dark, but I am very excited, only losing now and then, through an occasional blunder of my guide's. Had I been left to myself, I believed I should never have failed. The stakes increase in value.

"We shan't be able to see much longer, crowd it on this time and smash him up at once," is another whisper from my acquaintance. I had no time for thought; the bet was fifteen pounds, I raised the thimble myself, I could have sworn it was there; but it was not!

"Ah!" says my man, "I thought you were wrong; don't be in such a hurry, keep cool;" for since the mistakes he has made, I have taken the play somewhat out of his hands.

"Just time for one more round," says the presiding genius. "Now, be careful."

I hardly know what money I have in my pockets, but I take out notes and gold, and stake it all, for this time I can almost see the pea.

"Now, don't hurry, I tell ye, let this gent" (to the parson) "see fair again; tell him which is your thimble."

"That's it," say I, and once more the non-better raises the one I point to, but as he does so, I plainly see him very dexterously remove the pea. Of

course I have lost. I am furious, not about the money, but because I see the cheat. I say so, and refuse to hand over the stake."

"What do you mean by that, young fellow?" from one side of me. "That's a likely joke," from the other. "Pay up, pay up," from my friend, "you've fairly lost!"

"I won't, though, by Jove," I reply.

"Oh! we'll see about that; now then, bonnet him, Bob!"

A violent blow falls on the crown of my wide-awake, which drives it over my eyes, at the same instant a wet handkerchief, smelling of apples, is thrust under my nose. I feel dizzy and faint, I stagger and fall, and I remember nothing more!"

"What's up wi' ye, sir? what's up wi' ye?" were the broad Scotch accents which fell upon my ear as I lay prostrate on the road, aware that some one was endeavouring to raise me. "What could hae brought ye to this? hae ye tumbled doon in a fit, sir? or was it the whusky, eh?"

A moment or two restored me to a sense of my position, and recovering more rapidly than might have been expected, I struggled to my feet. There was still some light in the sky, so I could not have been long unconscious.

"Here's yer hat, sir; ye was amaist bleended wi' it, as I cam' by ye. Are ye hurt?"

No, I was not hurt, only shaken and stupified; but my watch, breast pin, money, sleeve links, all were gone! I saw at a glance what had happened.

"Tak' a wee drap o' this, sir," and the stranger offered me a flask, which I did not hesitate to put to my lips. The whisky did me good, and there was nothing for it now but to face Mr. Tuxford, and confide my discomfiture to him. I dreaded doing so certainly, but it was a very different feeling from that which would have accompanied my disclosure if I had been nearer Clapham.

"We are not far from Dunkeld, are we?" I inquired of the man standing in front of me.

"Na, na; a wee bit ower half a mile. I'm gaun there mysel', if ye wad let me show ye the way."

"Well, yes, as it's rather dark you may, though I think I know it."

"Yes, yes, ye'd better come along wi' me; you might tak' a wrang turn, and get up on the hill."

A quarter of an hour after this I was crossing the bridge with my good Samaritan. He told me, as we walked, that he was a groom out of place, and that he would be very thankful if I could give him a trifle for having assisted me, after my discomfiture. He did not press his inquiries as to what had brought me to it, and naturally I did not volunteer the information. I told him to wait at the door of the hotel, and I would give him something. I pass over the recapitulation of my adventure to Mr. Tuxford, whom I found, with the servants of the inn, of course in a great state of anxiety at my absence. I disguised nothing, whilst he replied with all that was appropriate to the occasion. As I had come to no further harm

than the loss of my money, etc., he did not show much anger, and inwardly, I believe, thought the whole thing likely to prove a beneficial lesson. I explained, at the conclusion of my narrative, that I must reward the groom who had just assisted me.

"Certainly," said Mr. Tuxford; "ring the bell, and send the man a sovereign; you might have been in the road all night if it had not been for him. Yet no," he continued, "we will go down into the passage and have a look at the fellow, for after what you have told me, it is not at all improbable that he is also one of the gang." With this, we walked into the hall of the hotel, and sent for the man, who was sitting on the doorstep. The full light of the lamp fell upon him as he stood before us, twirling his cap in his fingers. He looked thoroughly what he had described himself, and truly Scotch, with high cheekbones, short cut red hair, and small red whiskers. He was quite a stripling, apparently not more than twenty years of age.

My tutor faced him with a resolute stare for several minutes, under which the man evidently winced, while muttering a few hopes for my welfare. I said nothing, but I fixed the fellow's face very firmly in my mind.

"You shall not have a halfpenny," was Mr. Tuxford's cool remark; "and if you take my advice, the sooner you and your companions get out of this country the better, and think yourself precious lucky that you are able to do so."

The man raised a whining protest, rendered the more hypocritical by his over-strained accent, and slunk out of the house.

"Not a doubt of it," continued Mr. Tuxford, as we re-entered our sitting-room; "one of the gang to a certainty. These sharpers and swell-mobsmen have their hangers-on and agents in every town in the kingdom. No, you have spent quite money enough over this little bit of experience." He then took upon himself to give me a short lecture, which embraced some amusing accounts of the fraternity, showing how it clung together: burglars, pickpockets, swell-mobsmen, sharpers, thieves of all degrees, but each having his separate branch in the profession. "Your friend of the Rumbling Bridge," said Mr. Tuxford, "is probably at the top of the tree, being a clever fellow; but if he were to be down on his luck at any time, as the slang goes, he would not hesitate even to encroach on his burglarious brother's province. The rest were confederates, the reverend gentleman as you describe him, the other player, thimble-riggers all; this groom is possibly not very bright, and can only be trusted for just such offices as he performed for you. A spy, in fact, who helps himself when he can, graduating for higher things by-and-by. Evidently the path by the hills, being more retired, would have suited their plan better; that is why your guide tried to induce you to take it, and the man you saw on the other side crossing the river was scouting, having been put on the alert by the whistle."

But I need not pursue my admonitor's discourse any further, this is sufficient for the purpose of my narrative.

We had a very pleasant tour through Scotland, and of course it was deemed prudent never to confide my adventure to the anxious hearts at Stork House.

Eight years after these circumstances had happened, and when they, with other youthful follies, had nearly faded from my memory, I found myself once again on the road to Scotland. This time, however, I was bound no farther than the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and on a very different mission. Time had worked its changes, and I had become not only my own master but that of Stork House as well, and I was about to bring home to it a new mistress. My wild oats were sown, and I expected in the course of another month to be a respectable married man. The "lady of my love I dare not name," so I shall merely say that she was staying at the country seat of a mutual friend (in fact no other than one of the companions of my early Clapham days) not far from the village of Prestonpans, and near to the station of Tranent. Having been invited to join a large party staying in the house, I was going to enjoy the combined delights of love-making and partridge-shooting. So, on a bright morning early in September, I was journeying on this pleasant errand by the Great Northern line direct to Edinburgh.

On resuming my seat after getting some luncheon at Newcastle, I found the opposite corner of the carriage, hitherto unoccupied, filled by a rather shabbily-dressed, yet good-looking portly man. He was close shaven, with the exception of a tuft or imperial on his chin, which with his hair was slightly grey. Settling into my place, I saw he was gazing very intently at me, which circumstance evoked a scrutinizing glance in return from myself. The guard was whistling for the recommencement of our journey. The engine was answering with its preliminary shriek, when my opposite neighbour suddenly rose, opened the door, sprang out, said something to the guard, who, as the train began to move, hurried the man into another carriage. This seemed rather a funny proceeding, and it then occurred to me that I certainly must have seen the fellow before, yet I could not for my life remember how, when, or where. The whole thing happened so rapidly that I had no time to make any close observation of his dress or figure that might have helped my memory in this respect. For a while I puzzled myself in the way one does when one comes across a face that awakens vague recollections. I got quite annoyed about it; I looked out of window at the next station in the hope of seeing the traveller again, but he was not visible, and eventually I sank back to the perusal of my novel, and forgot all about him.

I slept in Edinburgh that night, and reached Tranent by one o'clock the next day. Getting my gun-case and luggage together, I was the last person to leave the platform; but as the dog-cart that was in waiting to convey me to Cawse Grange whirled away from the station, we overtook two persons arm-in-arm, who were walking from the train. One of these in particular caught my attention; it was the same man whose face had so puzzled me at Newcastle. I turned to look at him, but my vehicle went so fast round a bend in the road, that he was lost to view as I did so. For a little while I again gave myself up to wondering where the deuce I had seen the fellow before, but with no better result.

The arrival, and welcome which soon followed, drove everything else from my mind. Hospitable William Branston himself led the way to my room.



"Now don't be long, Charlie, old boy; luncheon will be ready in half an hour; there's a mount for you which will carry you anywhere that Kate will give you the lead," said he, as he left the room.

This remark had reference to a riding party which had been arranged to come off in the afternoon. A minute afterwards my host returned, shutting the door quietly behind him.

"By the way," he said, "I forgot to caution you; it seems a very funny thing to say to a man in one's own house, but the fact is, for the last fortnight a series of petty robberies have been going on here, and we have been unable to trace the thief. Many attempts have been made, and we shall succeed at last in catching him or her, no doubt; but, in the meantime, don't leave anything valuable about. Just turn the key of your portmanteau, you understand. It's very awkward, but this is all that can be done."

These precautions I took, and, in due time, stood ready with the rest of my friends on the steps in front of the house, as the horses were being brought round.

Katherine, I must record, was a first-rate horsewoman, and I believe no vainer little creature existed than she, when mounted on her pet blood-mare, Baby.

Our cavalcade was ready to start. I only waited to lift my love into her saddle, Baby being the last horse led from the stable. The animal's points so riveted my attention, that it was not until Kate was safely seated that I cast a glance at the groom who held the beast. As I did so, our eyes met. One of the queerest sensations I ever experienced then flashed through my brain; in a moment I recollected where I had seen the fellow who left the railway carriage the day before, and about whose identity I had been so puzzled. The whole thing came back to me, as if it had happened last week; the groom was no other than the red-haired Scotch vagabond who had found me lying in the road near Dunkeld; my railway companion, in spite of his shaven face, stood out clearly to my recollection as the Mentor who had initiated me into my first game at thimblorig.

I mounted my steed, pondering over the matter as we rode away. It could be no accident that brought these two men into the same neighbourhood at the same time; for had I not seen my quondam officer friend of eight years' since, at Tranent Station only two hours ago? No! this was no accident, and it was a direct means of accounting for the petty larceny mentioned as going on at Cawse Grange.

During the ride I took an opportunity of communicating my suspicions to Branston, with a slight outline of their foundation.

"This is very curious," said he. "Do you mean to say, you suspect John Leasher there? He has been in my service certainly but just a fortnight."

"I do suspect him," was my unhesitating reply; "and do tell me, where did you get him from?"

"Well, in truth, I had only a written character with him, and that was signed with the name of Percy Binks, who the fellow told me was a baronet in the habit of renting a moor every year in Sutherlandshire; and being hard pressed for a servant at the time, I took his word for it."

"Ho! ho!" cried I, "I've heard of Sir Percy Binks before; he's a myth to a certainty; this settles the question."

Branston went on, saying, "Well, but the man is hardly ever in the house, except when I send for him of an evening to give him orders for the next day."

"Never mind," I answered; "rely on it, if you don't keep a sharp look out, there will be a big burglary, or robbery of some kind, committed in the house—more than this, before very long too; these fellows lose no time."

"What would you advise then? Do you think either of them recognized you?"

"The groom did not, I am sure," I answered; "but I am equally certain the other rascal did yesterday; that is why he got out of the carriage in such a hurry when he saw me. Doubtless I have changed less in appearance than he, though my whiskers have come and his are gone."

"Send to Edinburgh for detectives—do you recommend that?" said my host, pondering.

"No," I continued, "that might excite suspicion; if you will allow me to advise I would lay a trap. We are five stalwart gentlemen here, and we could effect a most exciting capture, throw our net over the whole covey at once, for there are three or four of them in it, you may depend. I'll think over my plan a little, and when the ladies leave the dinner-table to-night, I will tell you what I propose."

This I did, and when the time arrived, took the rest of Mr. Branston's guests into my confidence. After calm deliberation, the following course of action was decided on. The house was so built that any one innocent even of all burglarious intentions could easily understand that the library window was its vulnerable point. It opened down to a short flight of steps, which led on to the lawn. In this room at night, when the ladies were gone to bed, the smokers were wont to resort. We were to be all rather tired, and not inclined for tobacco on this occasion, with the exception of Mr. Branston and one of the guests, who were to light up their cigars about eleven o'clock. John Leasher was then to be sent for as usual, to take some orders about the stable, particularly with reference to Baby, which beauty was under his especial care. The weather being fine, and yet warm, the window before referred to was to be left open; but just as John would be leaving the room, Mr. Branston was to call him back, and tell him to close the shutters. During this process, great care was to be taken not to look at his movements. The fastening, however, was afterwards to be examined, and should it be found that it was firmly secured, with the swinging bell hooked on to the bar, we were to conclude that no attempt would be made that night. If, on the other hand, the fastening should be carelessly done, and the bell not set in position, why we must prepare for action. A signal would then be given which was to bring us each quietly from our rooms down to the library, where, well armed with life preservers, and a strong rope or two, we were to hide ourselves, three behind the large folding screen, and one on either side of the window, shrouded by the curtains. Thus in ambush we were to be patient, and above all, silent. The gang, once well within the room, at

another signal we were to make a rush for it, and with little mercy secure our men. This may seem a gratuitous running into danger; but it was thought little need be apprehended, as it would be such a surprise that no material resistance could be offered. None of the servants were in our confidence, as we did not know whom to trust. It must likewise be remembered that we were all young, strong, adventurous Englishmen, and there was a spice of daring in it, which was alone a great charm. For myself, it can be easily understood, it was invested with the attraction of revenge on the rascal who had played me the scurvy trick of the thimbleric confederacy.

After my disclosures and suspicions had been discussed over our wine and walnuts, no one felt surprised to hear the signal given for our assembling in the library. Master John had fallen into the trap, as if he had been the most simple of doves. He hardly fastened the bar across the shutters, and he never thought (how should he, poor innocent, so unused to in-door work!) of the bell, though he could not have closed the shutters without seeing it.

For two hours we anxiously waited in complete darkness, "and the beating of our own hearts was all the sound we heard." I am posted behind one of the curtains. At last, sure enough, footsteps outside are heard! Squeak goes the sash window fastening, a slight jar, and the crowbar swings useless to and fro. Back goes the shutter, the light from the bull's eye of a dark lantern flashes straight into the room.

Softly! gently! in they come, one by one, four in all. John is not with them. Oh! dear no! *he* is fast asleep in bed, this is not his line; but there goes *my* fellow, I know his broad shoulders. Mine are as broad now, and I am taller; besides, he has more weight to carry in front. This time I overmatch him. Now for it—the signal is given—out we rush—man to man for a minute or two, with Branston to spare, and to hold up the fallen lantern.

On our side a few bruises, and a sprain or two, were the only evils attendant on the exploit. Two of the men were burly fellows, and but for the unexpected nature of the onslaught might have given serious trouble. They were pinioned, however, almost before they were aware of it. The third, a mere boy, was half strangled by the grip his adversary got of his throat, and it was like breaking a fly on the wheel. In grappling with my man, we both fell to the ground, fortunately he under me. His head coming into collision with the corner of the fender, he was rendered senseless almost before I could rise, so that after all I was in a measure cheated of my actual revenge, for the rascal never knew who was his antagonist, until I appeared against him in a court of justice. Messengers were despatched for the police. John Leasher was also given into custody on suspicion; but, unfortunately, we could make out no case against him, and the sneaking hound may probably even now be battenning on the skill and courage of his more daring brethren.

For the rest they had their deserts; and my satisfaction was that even the experiences of thimbleric had enabled me to render a most signal service to my friends at Cawse Grange.

W. W. FENN.

## A CRUISE IN SEARCH OF A SLAVER.

WE had received certain information from a member of the Aden native police that on or about a given day a large slave barque would anchor off a certain point of the coast of Arabia to the south-westward of Cape Mussendum. Our informant was a man who went by the name of Hassan; he was a very intelligent fellow, and often acted in secret missions under instructions from the Political Resident at Aden, and was invaluable where tact and courage were required. Hassan informed Captain K——, commanding the Hon. East India Company's ship-of-war, 'Ramnuggur,' that he had heard from a correspondent of his at Zanzibar that a vessel was about to sail for the Persian Gulf with a large cargo of slaves, and that her commander intended to drop in at this out-of-the-way part of the coast for the purpose of learning from his agent—who would come from Muscat to meet him—whether any British man-of-war was cruising about the Straits of Ormuz, which, as my readers know, forms the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Bassadore, in the island of Kishm, was in those days one of the chief stations of the small squadron of Indian navy ships in the waters of that inland sea, and formed a good vantage ground whence to pounce out upon slavers or piratical craft, which often disturbed trading vessels, both native and European, in the peaceful pursuit of their avocations.

The morning after receiving the information detailed above the 'Ramnuggur' weighed anchor and stood out of Aden harbour.

She was a fine craft, the 'Ramnuggur,' and I look back with feelings of mingled regret and sadness when I think of the brave old teak-built sloop-of-war. I look back with feelings of regret, for I feel sure I shall ne'er look upon her like again. In these days of steam and ironclad turrets, "the good old times" of sailing ships and "hearts of oak" are gone, I fear me, never to return. The sight of a man-of-war such as Nelson and Howe have rendered for ever famous by their deeds, and which Byron's glowingly descriptive verse has immortalized, we shall never more behold, while our children and future generations yet unborn will only know what a frigate in full sail was like by studying ancient "sea pieces," or such works as *Childe Harold* or Falconer's *Shipwreck*. In those "latter days" the British seaman, as we still see him, will exist no longer; his place will know him no more, and he will "move on" to make way for the man, half blacksmith, half artilleryman, and having a smattering of engineering, whose only duty it will be to work fifty-ton guns in revolving turrets, whence he can see nothing, and for aught I can tell, hear nothing too, for he must become stone deaf while confined in the iron chamber, in which, unhappy wight! he is doomed to *fight*—heaven save the mark! To such a pass do I, gifted with no prophetic vision, opine that the British man-o'-war's-man will come.

To return. The 'Ramnuggur,' eighteen-gun sloop, had scarcely left her moorings when an event of a painful character occurred. There was a pleasant breeze blowing, and the ship was sailing close-hauled with all

plain sail set; the sea looked bright and smooth, and only gentle waves, scarce more than ripples, danced over the surface to meet the ship's bows, against which they broke as though in playful mood. It was yachting weather, a time when a sailor's life is truly enjoyable, and the light-hearted Jacks give way to their dancing and singing propensities. Suddenly, about two o'clock, soon after the men had finished their dinners, one of the seamen who was employed on deck took a running leap right over the bulwarks into the sea. Brooks was at the time "serving" a "span" for one of the boats, and his watchmate and friend, who was "passing the ball" of "spun yarn" at the time, afterwards stated that he observed nothing extraordinary or unusual in his manner. He said that all at once Brooks dropped the "serving-mallet" he had in his hand, and merely saying "Good-bye," rushed away and leapt overboard.

The cry was immediately raised of "Man overboard!" It was repeated down in the lower deck, and in a few moments every man on board was at his post. "Bout ship;" "Down helm;" "Tacks and sheets," roared out the lieutenant of the watch. Everything was done in perfect order, without hurry or confusion. The 'Ramnuggur' answered her helm and flew up into the wind, throwing every sail flat aback. The wind blew a fierce gust from under the foot of the mainsail as the afteryards were swung round. Soon "Let go and haul" was the order, and the gallant sloop was standing back for the seaman who had quitted the protection of her wooden walls in so singular a manner. Two or three men, among them the quartermaster of the watch, had never taken their eyes off their shipmate, who, now that the 'Ramnuggur' was under way again, we could all see as he kept swimming in a direction away from the ship. Some of the men shouted out to him by name to stop a minute, as we would soon pick him up. He looked round now on hearing the cries, and stopped. The sloop "hove to" and a boat was quickly lowered. It was thought on board that the unfortunate man must have suddenly become insane, as his conduct was otherwise unaccountable. Soon the boat approached him. The 'Ramnuggur' also had filled her topsails, and was nearing the spot where he stood calmly "treading water." While writing these lines I can recall the man's face to my mind as he appeared standing upright in the water before us, and, like a practised swimmer, quietly keeping himself afloat merely by an occasional movement of the arms, while now and again he would raise his right hand and stroke the water off his beard and push the hair away from his eyes. He was perfectly calm, and looked at our preparations for his rescue without making a sign or uttering a word. Now the boat was close up to him; the bow oarsmen took in their oars; the ship was passing the place where he trod water at a distance of some twenty yards. He stirred himself, looked round and about him, and then without breaking silence threw up his arms and sank quickly out of sight. His shipmates in the cutter made one grasp at him as he disappeared, again at his long hair as it also sank beneath the surface of the summer sea, but in vain. The suicide eluded their grasp and descended into the bowels of the deep unfathomable waters; as deliberate a case of *felo-de-se* as I ever witnessed or heard of. Had you seen the placid expression in the



man's calm eyes, you could not have believed but that he was in the full possession of his senses. The boat's crew waited about on the spot where Brooks went down in the vain hope of his coming to the surface again; but only a few bubbles struggled up, the breath out of the body of the man dying fathoms beneath. The cutter returned to the ship, and after an hour had passed from the time of the commission of the deed the 'Ramnuggur' "filled her mainyard" again and stood on her course, while the name of the deceased seaman was marked in the ship's books D. D.—Discharged, Dead.

We gathered some rather interesting but very sad particulars of the former life of this unhappy man; and after hearing the short disconnected narrative from his "chum" on board the ship, all speculation as to the cause that drove the deceased to commit the rash deed ceased. His watchmate and "chum" told us that at odd times, when they were alone together, particularly during the long hours of the night watch, Brooks had told him that he was induced to ship on board the 'Ramnuggur' at Aden through despair caused by the unfaithfulness of his wife. He said he had left his wife and one child in England about nine months ago, and shipped as second mate in a merchant vessel, which took out coals to Aden for the overland traffic. He took his departure from his home with great sorrow and with some foreboding; it was the first time he had ever been parted from his wife, who was a young and inexperienced creature. They had been married about one year, and she had given birth to a little boy shortly before his departure. He was obliged to go to sea, for he had no private means, and his savings from former voyages had all been expended. Well, he took ship in this collier to Aden; his young wife came up to Cardiff to see him embark, and there they parted. The passage to Aden was a long and stormy one. Six months passed away before they anchored in Aden harbour. He found letters awaiting him, breathing nothing but devotion and love and fervent prayers for his speedy and safe return. His ship was detained a long time in Aden before she could be unladen, for there were so many vessels whose turn to unload came first, and thus some three months passed away. At last they discharged their coals and took in ballast, intending to proceed to Bombay, where they hoped to pick up some cargo to carry home.

Just a few days before his ship was about to sail a letter came from England. It altered his plans for life, and broke his heart. This letter was from his wife, informing him that she had left his home and had fled with another man, and, praying for forgiveness, concluded with a hope that he would forget her very existence. This fearful betrayal of all his best and purest feelings nearly caused his death. He became very ill, and was sent on shore to the hospital at Aden, suffering from brain fever. When at length he recovered and was discharged, he resolved never to revisit England again. With this object in view, Brooks, now a broken-hearted man, and a victim to confirmed melancholia, shipped as an able seaman on board the 'Ramnuggur.' He had only been a few months in her, during which he had conducted himself in so respectful and creditable a manner that the first lieutenant had decided to promote him to the post of captain of the foretop, when he committed suicide in the cool premeditated manner

I have described. So much for the painful episode in our cruise in search of a slaver.

During the remainder of the voyage along the southern shores of Arabia nothing unusual occurred to vary the monotony of life at sea. The coast here is uninteresting to a degree; nothing but a long unbroken desert line meets the eye, and seldom do even a few date trees relieve with their foliage the depressing sameness of desert, desert, everywhere. Now and then we overhauled some miserable Arab "buglahs" creeping along from one obscure port to another. The swarthy mariners who man these craft are certainly not gifted with the adventurous spirit of a Columbus, but closely "hug" the shore in their short voyages, and fly into the nearest port on the approach of an ordinary gale.

At length, in spite of contrary winds, and light baffling airs, and dead calms, we arrived in the vicinity of Cape Mussendum, the trysting-place. Scarcely had we reached the bluff headland than a sail was sighted. We were a good many days before the anticipated time for the slaver's arrival, but still it was very possible she had encountered more favourable winds than we were lucky enough to meet, so expectation rose very high on board the 'Ramnuggur' that we had most opportunely stumbled across the object of our cruise. All hands were turned out, and every square inch of canvas that would draw was set, while the course was altered for chasing, and the yards trimmed to the wind. The 'Ramnuggur' was considered in those days a smart craft, and few ships in the Hon. East India Company's service could compete with her. Her good sailing qualities were soon demonstrated on this occasion, for though we had been warned that the slaver was one of the swiftest of her class, and had long been renowned for the success with which she had always hitherto managed to elude men-of-war, yet all hands, both officers and men, were proud to see the facility with which the old 'Ram,' as she was familiarly called, gained upon her adversary. There was something unaccountable about the chase: at first she stood on her course and did not appear in the least to wish to avoid us, and it was only when the barque seemed fully alive to the fact that she was being chased that she also began to crowd all sail, and show her heels to us. As the fugitive did not run up her colours—a very suspicious circumstance—we did not hoist ours. When after a short run we neared her, all doubt of the identity of the vessel with the slaver was removed. She was barque-rigged, and moreover had two distinguishing marks that carried conviction into the minds of the most sceptical. There was a bright yellow band all round her just below the upper deck ports, and she had an unusually great "sheer." It would soon be all up with the barque, for now though only eight bells, four o'clock in the afternoon, the 'Ramnuggur' had succeeded in getting within gun-shot of her. "Clear away the foremost carronade on the port side," called out Captain K——, and the gun's crew sprung forward with alacrity to the duty. "Load with round shot and let her have a taste of our metal, men," he added cheerily.

Hurrah! the prize would soon be ours! and we youngsters forthwith began laying bets as to the number of slaves we should capture, and the amount

of head-money that would fall to the share of each individual "reefer." "Bang," and a thirty-two pound shot thundered out of the carronade after the runaway, while at the same moment the blue ensign—we were under the command of a commodore of the second class, went fluttering up to the mizen peak, showing that our ship was a member of the Navy of England. The effect was magical. The stranger immediately hove to with her main-top-sail to the mast, and the pursuit was over.

All the middies agreed with one voice "that this was very jolly." Like the 'coon and the American colonel, in the funny Yankee story, our friend, when he saw resistance was useless and escape out of the question, considerably determined to spare an unnecessary waste of gunpowder.

A boat was speedily lowered, and, just as it was putting off for the barque, she also ran up the English ensign at her mizen.

"Ah no! my friend," ejaculated some of us, "that dodge won't do." "No, indeed," echoed all hands.

The second lieutenant took charge of the cutter and went on board. He remained some time, but at length was seen returning; yet how blank his face looked. What could it mean? We were soon enlightened. It meant that we had made a mistake; it was not the slaver at all that we had been chasing, but a barque bound from Mocha to Bushire with merchandise, and having some pilgrims on board returning from Mecca. Nothing more.

All hands blessed the skipper of the barque for not showing his ensign sooner, and for running away as if he had been engaged in some unlawful traffic; but to questions put to him by the second lieutenant bearing on these points, he replied that he did not run away at first, but on seeing that we were chasing him, and hoisted no colours whereby our nationality might have been made apparent, he concluded that the 'Ramnuggur' must be a pirate, and therefore, after a short consultation with his mates, resolved to trust to his fleetness, which, however, did not stand him in good stead. Rather chapfallen were all hands; and the captain shut up his telescope after receiving this explanation, and went down to his cabin looking highly disgusted.

It was a little singular that the barque should be exactly on the spot defined by the police agents, and about the specified time; and it was a no less strange coincidence that she should have the distinguishing marks also given us as our guide. There was not a shadow of a doubt that Hassan had acted in good faith, for his character and his long services placed him beyond suspicion; but then he might have been deceived by his informant.

Captain K——'s first impulse was to return to Aden and give up the whole thing in disgust; but, after mature deliberation, he resolved to wait at least until the day had arrived when it was stated that the slaver would be off the Arabian coast near Cape Mussendum. So we stood back and cruised "off and on" the shore, disguising the ship as much as possible. It was a difficult matter, and one not very acceptable to the smart officers and crew of the 'Ramnuggur,' to throw off the crack man-o'-war spruceness for which the ship had always been remarkable, and assume the slipshod, slovenly, out-at-elbows look of a common merchantman.

"Everything is fair in love and war," says the proverb, though all the little arts necessary to be adopted in "effecting a conquest," whether of a lady's heart or of a rascally slaver, are not pleasing to an honourable lover or a downright British tar. However, the ship was disguised in a measure, and we had our reward for thus voluntarily wounding our professional feelings in their tenderest point.

Ten days had passed by since the last contretemps; it was four days over the date fixed as the probable limit within which the slaver was to anchor off the coast on the Arabian side of Cape Mussendum, and yet nothing in the least resembling the expected stranger had turned up. The captain was clearly getting into a bad temper, if he had not worked himself into one already; the seamen and marines looked sulky. "Jack" would not dance his eventide hornpipe, though the ship's fiddler piped to him (metaphorically, for of course he fiddled) "never so sweetly," and "Joey"\* would not be comforted. All hands were in the dumps.

"Turn the hands out. Make sail. Mr. Maintop," shouted the captain, addressing the first lieutenant, "the course is south-east by south half south. D—— the slaver and that fellow Hassan too," he added, as he paced the quarter-deck in a towering fury.

The course now given would take us back to Aden, so we learned the captain had given up the search in disgust.

"Sail ho!" echoed all over the ship, as the loud-voiced look-out man hailed the deck.

It was the last chance. Several officers sprang up the shrouds to catch a glimpse of the stranger; but Captain K—— strode up and down, looking very red, and as if he would like to catch some one doing something, so that he might let the cat-o'-nine-tails out of the bag and flay the said some one's back. In a few minutes the first lieutenant came down from the rigging, and, stepping up to the enraged "autocrat of the quarter deck," stated his opinion that the sail now in sight was the real Simon Pure, the veritable slaver.

"I say, sir, the slaver be hanged,"—he used a stronger expression, but that's neither here nor there—"I'm going back to Aden," answered our skipper. However, he was not inexorable, for, on standing to the southward, we somewhat neared the craft in sight, which was making towards the land. A closer inspection showed us the two peculiarities, the possession of which Hassan averred would distinguish the slave ship. There they were as plain as a pike staff, the bright yellow band all round the ship, from the head boards to the counter, and the unusual "sheer" in her build. On this being pointed out to Captain K—— he was somewhat mollified, and ordered chase to be given. Sail was quickly made, and the old 'Ramnuggur' was again under a cloud of canvas.

Well, to cut my yarn short, we overhauled the barque "hand over fist." She attempted to escape, and stood out to sea again. After a short chase a round shot from one of our foremost guns wounded her spanker boom, and nearly cut away her mizen mast, so seeing that any further attempt at flight was useless, the skipper of the barque made a virtue of necessity, and "letting

\* The forecastle term for the marines.

run" her top-gallant sail and topsail halliards, surrendered at discretion, and awaited our taking possession. A boat was sent on board, and it was found that there were no less than four hundred and fifty-six slaves in her hold and 'tween decks. The scene that was presented by these miserable wretches baffles description, and I will not attempt to depict it. Other abler pens have failed in doing justice to the horrors of the "middle passage," or the unspeakable abominations of the crowded lower decks of a vessel engaged in this infamous traffic; and therefore I shall not seek to describe the scenes that met the disgusted eye and the not less nauseous stench that assailed the sensitive nose of your humble servant.

With the brevity of that prince of correspondents, Cæsar, when communicating with the Roman senate, I will conclude with saying, "We came, we saw, we took possession."

The barque received a prize crew which navigated her to Aden, where she was condemned by the Admiralty court, and the whole of the unfortunate slaves—slaves no longer—were set at liberty. And here ends the account of our cruise in search of a slaver.

C. R. Low.



## OVER HUNGERFORD BRIDGE.

AFTER rambling about on the Surrey side of the bridges, to mount the wooden incline that leads up from the low bank, and catch the fresh breeze that blows along the river, and watch its brightness and its bustle, from the Hungerford foot-bridge, is something like turning to poetry after reading police cases. There is a good deal of prose mixed up with the poetry: you see gasometers as well as the cross-crowned dome of St. Paul's and the spires of the city churches, lime-heaped wharfs as well as the grassy gardens of the Temple, tumble-down hovels and gloomy ranges of warehouses as well as the façade of Somerset House and the towers of the Palace of Westminster, coal-lighters lumbering along sideways like dead whales as well as glancing wherries, and the white awnings, bright flags, and brighter faces, of river steamers reeling beneath their load of holiday-makers; but still the prospect, as a whole, is a great relief after the squalid melancholy in which you have been wandering. It is not a lively locality, that "Surrey side." By day, at least;—and its nocturnal vivacity is not more cheerful, owing its genesis to the peculiar proclivities of New Cut and York-street roughs; ruffians, now garotting and now houcussing, from Kent-street and the Mint, and the harlots and pickpockets who colonise in dingy streets leading out of the Waterloo-road. The obelisk in St. George's-circus—a hoary modern antique, dating not further back than the third George's time—has no venerableness in its grey: it seems to have grizzled prematurely through constant contemplation of the dreariness of the thoroughfares which there converge. One of them is now blocked with a chaos of windlasses, boarded shafts and galleries, and earth-heaps on which the sewer-making navvies recline during their dinner-hour, snoring in the sunlight with a



sustained vigour that thunderously echoes along the road; and yet it looks more wakeful than it ever looked before. Almost the only bright-looking objects in the Blackfriars-road are the gilt wheel which a "dealer in cotton waste" displays as sign, and the gilt dog, hungrily nosing in a gilt skillet, mounted above another shop at a corner; and their exceptional brilliance is more than set off by the doleful dirt and dilapidation of the "houses in Chancery" at the corner of Stamford-street. In spite of the rusty iron girders which stretch across the filthy areas, the murky, melancholy old tenements, that have so long stood tenantless, seem ever on the point of falling down like Judas. The areas are not only thick with dust but littered with glass and stones and brickbats. Every pane in the windows is smashed; fringed with stiff clotted lashes of jagged glass, the frames stare blankly like gouged eye-sockets. Both from window-frame and door the last blister of paint has cracked and crumbled, and a fur of brown soot encrusts them; whilst the bricks stand out with blackness even in the midst of London grime. Stamford-street, as a whole, is about as lively as an empty canal-lock, but the rest of it looks comparatively cheerful after those dismal old houses at the corner. Save where omnibuses constantly rattle and rendezvous, the general characteristic of Surrey side thoroughfares is gritty desolation. In its second-hand furniture shops denser and more angular dust lies on the greasy arm-chairs, the battered cabinets, and mildewed bedsteads than can be found at any other brokers'. You might write your name on the long-vanished white and faded blue of the rocket-cases in its firework shops. It seems to have taken to that manufacture in desperation at its dreariness. Now and then in its squalid streets you come upon a music-shop, where melancholy moustached men are turning over fly-spitten songs and sonatas, and trying dusty pianos whose merriest tunes seem set in minor keys as they tinkle out into the circumambient shabbiness and silence. Most melancholy, least musical of birds are those exposed for sale on the Surrey side. The very larks sing out of tune, as they flutter in the pill-box cages that have worn their tails to stumpy, plumeless quills. Normally brisk chirpers and hoppers mope with drooping wings amongst the seed-husks at the bottom of their dungeons, with only spirit enough left to croak upbraidingly in whispers. The Cochinchina cocks languidly protract the most lugubrious lament that even those low-spirited fowl can wail. The magpies in their dusty rusty black, and rumped dirty white, look as seedy and sleepy and sulky as Cremorne waiters on the morning after an Oaks night. The Surrey side flower-stall is as depressing a sight. The arum is turning yellow like old ivory. The once white fuchsias are dredged with filthy dust as thickly as an auricula with its pure powder. The fallen musk-blossoms have given dull buff facings to the faded scarlet uniform of the geraniums; and they in their turn have dropped their dim petals on their shrivelled leaves like splashes of lack-lustre sealing-wax, and what were once clumps of bloom bristle like burnt-out fireworks.

The inchoate thoroughfares of the Surrey side are still more dreary than its old ones. Here towers a pretentious hop-warehouse in brand-new white and red, and at its foot spreads a wilderness of hummocked, ash-strewn soil,

enclosed in rails that look as if all the sweeps in London had been employed to rub soot into their very grain; and behind, the vilest slums, with here and there a remnant of a shorn-off hovel protruding in harsh ruin, squint villainously round corners; or a quadrangle of squat almshouses looks very uncomfortable at having its conventual somnolence laid bare. Charitable institutions of every kind jostle on the Surrey side, but they all have a sad, half-hopeless look, as if depressed by living in a neighbourhood so constantly in need of charity which they cannot give. They peer peevishly through their smoky trees, as if that apology for foliage tantalised them with a wish to swarm off bodily into the country. The meeting-houses on the Surrey side, on week days, remind one, for the most part, of dusty, mildewed boxes stowed away in a lumber-room—even Mr. Spurgeon's ambitious tabernacle is already defiled with stains like the "tide-marks" of a half-washed face; and even more dreary are most of the churches. Their graveyards, when I last saw them, were ablaze with marigolds, but the brightness of the flowers springing rankly from the unkempt soil, fat with decaying corpses, went no deeper than the eye. They made a fit wreath for a black yet hoary-headed tottering tombstone, half hidden in the coarse grass like an aged negress performing Obeah rites upon the sly. The new Surrey Theatre is a more architectural building than the old, but it has put on the doleful drab uniform of the district, and by day time dust and straw eddy depressingly between the locked gates and the locked doors of its flat portico. The ugliest brewery, the most gloomy bonded warehouse, is a more beautiful, exhilarating object than the Victoria Theatre. Nor do the bewildering lines of broad railway arches, straddling through the wildernesses they have made, add any amenity to the Surrey side. Their bills and boards, gay with white and red and blue and green and gold, flout the surrounding squalor with their garishness, when posted outside; or cling to the walls inside, like flocks of tropical birds dimly seen roosting in a jungle. Their atmosphere is damply close and dissipating as that of the cave of Trophonius. The Blackfriars Station of the London, Chatham, and Dover might, perhaps, look cheerful if planted anywhere else, but the raw handsomeness of its variegated brick merely makes the eyes blink in the dull neighbourhood in which it stands. The Waterloo Terminus, on the other hand, is quite in keeping with the district. Its amorphous pile of dingy brick, its melancholy arches that seem far fitter for family vaults than shops, its muddy, narrow entrances, its mire-splashed wood-work, its sprawling stucco superscription peeling from the wall, combine to make the Waterloo Terminus in complete harmony with its surroundings—the dreariest London station in the dreariest London road. Even noble Waterloo Bridge grows hideous when it touches Surrey. Its glistening, columned stone degenerates into grimy, jumbled brick. Passing under the gloomy arch with which it spans the tunnel-like riverside road, you make the discovery that the houses built upon its Surrey side approach have not an inch of back yard. Above its sloping range of board-blocked crypts runs, high up in the air, a range of wooden pantries, stuck on to the houses after the fashion of conservatories. Are clothes hung out to dry, and children sent to play, in those lofty cupboards? Here and there in the road along the river you come upon a hand-

some dwelling-house, with a sweep of once white steps, and a plot on which grass once grew, in front, converted now into the office of the neighbouring wharf. It looks sulkily ashamed as you go by, as if it did not like any one but *habitués* to see brass rails with account-books laid on the top of them, gleaming from the windows of what used to be its drawing-room. Although the road is fringed with wharfs, whose overhanging stacks of timber scent the air with turpentine, the thoroughfare is strangely quiet. At the entrance of one of the wharfs stands a bronzed bargemaster, attired in claret-coloured, flapped, plush cap, blue guernsey, and new green corduroys, tranquilly smoking, and watching, with a droll mixture of philosophical curiosity and philosophical contempt, a trio of lime-dusted hobbledehoys, who, squatting on the narrow pavement, are trying to make the tatters of their greasy corduroys less patent by cat's-cradle undergirdings of twine. *Il y a fagot et fagot*. "All corduroy-wearers are not alike," seems to be the profound reflection of the self-satisfied bargemaster. On the pebbly "hard" beyond the wharf, mudlarks, with their trousers tucked up to the hips, are dabbling in the rippling water and playing pitch and toss under the lee of a lop-sided lighter. The flag-staffed, light-house-like shot-towers, seen from that quiet road, have almost as lonely a look as if they were fixed on Eddystone or the Bell Rock. The red-nightcapped, leather-aproned draymen seem some new order of monks as they move about in the quadrangles of the lofty Lion Brewery. When you approach the turnstile of the foot-bridge, a policeman, lounging on the metal counter, and chatting with the toll-taker, has to make way for you. There are very few people on the bridge. The lack of popular inscriptions and sketches on its chains and railings would seem to indicate that at no time can there be many foot passengers upon it. Throughout the entire length its red brown-and-gold bears but two specimens of such mural art—a sum in simple multiplication, and a fancy portrait of a mounted field officer, with a hooked nose almost as huge as his cocked hat; both in crayon. For a moment there is peace upon the adjoining railway; its friction-polished metals gleam untraversed; its lofty signal-station stands lonely as a house on piles in the middle of a marsh. But in another moment there is a creaking jerk, the arms of the semaphores are stiffly going through their extension motions; the bridge quivers; and a train rushes past, so close and so little above their level, that you cannot help fancying for a second that your toes will be crunched in spite of the intervening palisade. Thenceforward engines are constantly panting past you, one way or the other: detached engines crawling along languidly, as if they had crept out of the shed to get a breath of fresh air; engines backing long lines of empty carriages; and engines hurrying along with crowded trains, whose guards, leaning out over the doors of their vans, view all they pass with the stolid gaze of stale familiarity, whose cockney passengers do not even take the trouble to look out, but whose country passengers excitedly gather at the windows to catch a glimpse of the bright bustling river and the busy embankment works.

They certainly are worth looking at: it is a queerly chaotic waste to see so near the serried rows and jumbles of dusky dwellings that crowd down upon it. Yonder there is some sign of cosmos emerging from the chaos;

the earthwork plateau is filled in, and the granite facings glisten in the sunlight. But near the bridge the scene is, to the non-professional eye, a mere nightmare vision of hopelessly confused and behind-hand engineering. A tiny cascade is tumbling from the riverside boarding as water splashes down the gates of a canal lock or a mill-dam. Alongside lies an arid earth-barge, into and out of whose open hold navvies' barrows, slung in a triangle of hooked cord, are constantly descending empty and ascending full. A panting steam crane hauls them up; its grimy driver, glued to its little wooden step, looking, as he swings backwards and forwards with his engine, a mere piece of its machinery. All over the works these industrious little black monsters keep up their consequential pant. A heavier puffing proceeds from a pumping engine, planted on an oasis of small coal, and a dismal clank from the huge, clay-coloured links of its ever revolving chain; whilst through a grotesquely bent pipe water runs out into a muddy reservoir. Here yawns a deep, broad gap, sided and crossed with an angular confusion of planks, which give it the look of a Noah's ark in frame. There curving tramroads run apparently nowhither. Along springy paths of plank, navvies, in blue check shirts, and dirty white jumpers, are wheeling their barrows, piled high like jelly glasses, with straining arms, or sauntering back with them empty, propelling handles turned into carelessly drawing shafts. Ballast-waggons and contractors' tumbrils seem to be emptying their loads at random,—sierras of loam and gravel to be rising under a fortuitous concourse of atoms. In two or three places men are laying fat bags, which, when thrown down, give out a cloud of white dust, like flour sacks. In the centre of the level that has been made stands a shanty, as black, and rough, and desolately ruinous as the remains of a log hut in the midst of a fire-blasted prairie. Here drain-pipes are littered like the chimney-tops of houses engulfed by earthquake; there lies a massive wooden pile like the stranded keelson of a wreck; and yonder bask half-a-dozen granite blocks like fallen obelisks in an Egyptian sand-plain.

York Stairs, separated by the whole breadth of the embankment from the water that once lapped their stones with musical splash, have a dolefully widowed look. Their black and grey seems like mourning put on for their bereavement. The stairs proper, indeed, have vanished, the grass-fringed steps against which wherries, and, earlier, barges with gilt moulding and gay banners and merry minstrelsy, used to grind. The rough dirt and rubbish are levelled flush with the bottoms of the rustic columns. The iron gates are broken down, and sprawl in the archway, orange-red with rust. Writing years ago of the place once inhabited by the Bishops of Norwich and the Archbishops of York; Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; and Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Albans; and by both the Buckinghams; who have left their names sown broadcast there,—Leigh Hunt observed, "A little spot remains, with a few trees, and a graceful piece of art, and the river flowing as calmly as meditation." The trees still struggle into leaf along their neglected walk; Inigo Jones's Water Gate still bears its lions, and its cable-wreathed anchors, its Villiers' arms, and their motto, which seems so queer a one to have been borne by Charles the Second's Buckingham, *Fidei*

some dwelling-house, with a sweep of once white steps, and a plot on which grass once grew, in front, converted now into the office of the neighbouring wharf. It looks sulkily ashamed as you go by, as if it did not like any one but *habitués* to see brass rails with account-books laid on the top of them, gleaming from the windows of what used to be its drawing-room. Although the road is fringed with wharfs, whose overhanging stacks of timber scent the air with turpentine, the thoroughfare is strangely quiet. At the entrance of one of the wharfs stands a bronzed bargemaster, attired in claret-coloured, flapped, plush cap, blue guernsey, and new green corduroys, tranquilly smoking, and watching, with a droll mixture of philosophical curiosity and philosophical contempt, a trio of lime-dusted hobbledehoys, who, squatting on the narrow pavement, are trying to make the tatters of their greasy corduroys less patent by cat's-cradle undergirdings of twine. *Il y a fagot et fagot*. "All corduroy-wearers are not alike," seems to be the profound reflection of the self-satisfied bargemaster. On the pebbly "hard" beyond the wharf, mudlarks, with their trousers tucked up to the hips, are dabbling in the rippling water and playing pitch and toss under the lee of a lop-sided lighter. The flag-staffed, light-house-like shot-towers, seen from that quiet road, have almost as lonely a look as if they were fixed on Eddystone or the Bell Rock. The red-nightcapped, leather-aproned draymen seem some new order of monks as they move about in the quadrangles of the lofty Lion Brewery. When you approach the turnstile of the foot-bridge, a policeman, lounging on the metal counter, and chatting with the toll-taker, has to make way for you. There are very few people on the bridge. The lack of popular inscriptions and sketches on its chains and railings would seem to indicate that at no time can there be many foot passengers upon it. Throughout the entire length its red brown-and-gold bears but two specimens of such mural art—a sum in simple multiplication, and a fancy portrait of a mounted field officer, with a hooked nose almost as huge as his cocked hat; both in crayon. For a moment there is peace upon the adjoining railway; its friction-polished metals gleam untraversed; its lofty signal-station stands lonely as a house on piles in the middle of a marsh. But in another moment there is a creaking jerk, the arms of the semaphores are stiffly going through their extension motions; the bridge quivers; and a train rushes past, so close and so little above their level, that you cannot help fancying for a second that your toes will be crunched in spite of the intervening palisade. Thenceforward engines are constantly panting past you, one way or the other: detached engines crawling along languidly, as if they had crept out of the shed to get a breath of fresh air; engines backing long lines of empty carriages; and engines hurrying along with crowded trains, whose guards, leaning out over the doors of their vans, view all they pass with the stolid gaze of stale familiarity, whose cockney passengers do not even take the trouble to look out, but whose country passengers excitedly gather at the windows to catch a glimpse of the bright bustling river and the busy embankment works.

They certainly are worth looking at: it is a queerly chaotic waste to see so near the serried rows and jumbles of dusky dwellings that crowd down upon it. Yonder there is some sign of cosmos emerging from the chaos;



the earthwork plateau is filled in, and the granite facings glisten in the sunlight. But near the bridge the scene is, to the non-professional eye, a mere nightmare vision of hopelessly confused and behind-hand engineering. A tiny cascade is tumbling from the riverside boarding as water splashes down the gates of a canal lock or a mill-dam. Alongside lies an arid earth-barge, into and out of whose open hold navvies' barrows, slung in a triangle of hooked cord, are constantly descending empty and ascending full. A panting steam crane hauls them up; its grimy driver, glued to its little wooden step, looking, as he swings backwards and forwards with his engine, a mere piece of its machinery. All over the works these industrious little black monsters keep up their consequential pant. A heavier puffing proceeds from a pumping engine, planted on an oasis of small coal, and a dismal clank from the huge, clay-coloured links of its ever revolving chain; whilst through a grotesquely bent pipe water runs out into a muddy reservoir. Here yawns a deep, broad gap, sided and crossed with an angular confusion of planks, which give it the look of a Noah's ark in frame. There curving tramroads run apparently nowhither. Along springy paths of plank, navvies, in blue check shirts, and dirty white jumpers, are wheeling their barrows, piled high like jelly glasses, with straining arms, or sauntering back with them empty, propelling handles turned into carelessly drawing shafts. Ballast-waggons and contractors' tumbrils seem to be emptying their loads at random,—sierras of loam and gravel to be rising under a fortuitous concourse of atoms. In two or three places men are laying fat bags, which, when thrown down, give out a cloud of white dust, like flour sacks. In the centre of the level that has been made stands a shanty, as black, and rough, and desolately ruinous as the remains of a log hut in the midst of a fire-blasted prairie. Here drain-pipes are littered like the chimney-tops of houses engulfed by earthquake; there lies a massive wooden pile like the stranded keelson of a wreck; and yonder bask half-a-dozen granite blocks like fallen obelisks in an Egyptian sand-plain.

York Stairs, separated by the whole breadth of the embankment from the water that once lapped their stones with musical splash, have a dolefully widowed look. Their black and grey seems like mourning put on for their bereavement. The stairs proper, indeed, have vanished, the grass-fringed steps against which wherries, and, earlier, barges with gilt moulding and gay banners and merry minstrelsy, used to grind. The rough dirt and rubbish are levelled flush with the bottoms of the rustic columns. The iron gates are broken down, and sprawl in the archway, orange-red with rust. Writing years ago of the place once inhabited by the Bishops of Norwich and the Archbishops of York; Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; and Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Albans; and by both the Buckinghams; who have left their names sown broadcast there,—Leigh Hunt observed, "A little spot remains, with a few trees, and a graceful piece of art, and the river flowing as calmly as meditation." The trees still struggle into leaf along their neglected walk; Inigo Jones's Water Gate still bears its lions, and its cable-wreathed anchors, its Villiers' arms, and their motto, which seems so queer a one to have been borne by Charles the Second's Buckingham, *Fidei*

*Coticula Crux*; but the river has vanished. At least, it has been forced to retreat to a remote distance, and the human-faced couchant lions look reproachfully over the intervening waste at the crowded penny boats, spotted with guardsmen's uniforms like poppies, arriving at and departing from the far-off dummies, as if they were dreamily lamenting the contrast between the present and the past. In names only does the district on the east foot of Hungerford Bridge retain its splendour. York-place is an alley peopled by small hairdressers and greengrocers; York-buildings a pile of gloomy offices; the *George* a public-house,—a decent-looking place of its kind, although it is crowded up in a corner, but somehow, when you look at it, you cannot help being reminded of the worst inn's worst room and the incongruous decoration of the miserable truckle-bed. Duke-street and Buckingham-street are funereal thoroughfares of grimy brick and smutty painted façades, with dingy boards protruding from the open doorways, and fly-spitten bills wafered to the dusty window panes, announcing chambers and offices to let. Modern architecture has broken out at a corner of Buckingham-street in free-stone and polished granite pillars, but the pedestals have been chipped and the pillars have been dimmed with damp and grease, and the building does not look out a whit more cheerfully on the rarely trodden pavement than do the mouldy old houses that advertise "Furnished Apartments" in their dusky parlour windows, or the "desirable residence," which, in spite of its mildewed, dusty desolation, plumes itself on the possession of high, narrow windows, running up, like a giraffe's neck, from the bottom of the first to the top of the second floor. It is hard to realise that foreign ambassadors have been lodged in state, and that their multitudinous retainers have brawled, "to the effusion of blood," as the Scotch law says, for precedence, in a spot so sombre and silent. Still, at any rate, the old streets and alleys were laid out by the second Duke of Buckingham when he pulled down his palace. The Charing Cross Hotel is a very showy pile, but one can hardly help grudging that it and the railway that runs into it, should have almost destroyed the identity of Villiers-street by shearing off one side, and generally turning it topsy-turvy. Hungerford Market, too, is gone, and though that was but a modernised representative of the Hungerford House that stood upon its site when York House was still a palace, a dreamy loungee in London must needs regret the cool, cheerful-looking mart, with its moist slate and marble slabs, adorned with bowls of gold fish, and silvery turbot embossed with coral-red lobsters.

The railway advertises "light and airy" arches to let. Some of the unoccupied ones, I have read, have been temporarily occupied by street Arabs, and exultingly christened "The Just Found Out." If they have any light, they must be a pleasanter sign to put up at than the Arabs' old hostel, the Adelphi arches. It is curious to stand at the mouth of one of these, and watch the few people who enter and emerge gradually vanish or loom into distinctness like lead-miners in a sloping shaft. The buildings above, that bear the names of the architect, Adelphi, Adam, Robert, James and John, are not much more cheerful. Like the adjoining streets, they are a warren of chambers and offices, but the rabbits so rarely pop in and out, that

the pavements and roadways appear Pompeiian. A dreary hush broods in the atmosphere of the Adelphi. Drab turned up with dirt is its uniform. The other buildings look insulted when a pile of chambers suddenly takes it into its head to clothe itself from head to foot in white paint, and whilst the whiteness lasts, it shimmers in the surrounding gloom far more like a sheet of penance than a festal garb. The Arts, you cannot help fancying, must languish like flowers in a dried-up pot in the dustily melancholy mansion of the Society that has taken them under its special protection in the Adelphi. It is odd to note so many, and so various, and so frequently changing names on door-post and lobby-wall, and yet to wander in silence so sepulchral. Are the Pure Literature, and the Home for Little Boys, the Social Science, and the Reform League, the Naval Architecture, and all the other people who sport active-sounding titles in the Adelphi, taking siesta behind their blinds? What has become of the fast bachelors popularly supposed to have chambers therein? Do they only come out with the bats? At any rate, the place is quiet as a Quakers' meeting. When you pass a family hotel, and catch a glimpse of gleaming cruet-stands and snowy napkins, and inhale a pungently unctuous whiff of mulligatawny, you are almost as much startled as if you had come upon preparations for a feast in the heart of a pyramid. The most cheerful part of the Adelphi is the Terrace. Its pilastered front looks out upon the river, and an attempt is made to make it gay with flowers and green with creepers. But it, too, is dull and faded as a drowsy dowager. The bricks show through the vanishing plaster of its western wing. If you look over the river railing, you see not the river, but the embankment's wilderness, and the flat asphalt roofs of stables peppered with pebbles, and the dreary yards of Oxygen Works littered with tar-barrels. The chances are that not a soul besides yourself will be hanging over the palisade; but before you turn to plunge into London bustle again, half relieved and half flustered, at the Adam-street corner of the Strand, you may call to mind that Johnson has leaned on those rails before you, talking sadly to Boswell of their old friends Beauclerc and Garrick, no longer sprightly tenants of their then still bright-looking houses in the faded old terrace behind your back.

RICHARD ROWE.



## THE LAST LORDS OF GARDONAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

## PART III.

**I**MMEDIATELY after the departure of his prisoners, the baron began to make preparations for his wedding, for although he detested the Innominato in his heart, he had still the fullest reliance on his fulfilling the promise he had made. His assurance was further confirmed by a messenger from the astrologer to inform him that on the next Wednesday the affianced bride would arrive with her suite, and that he (the Innominato) had given this notice, that all things might be in readiness for the ceremony.

Neither expense nor exertion was spared by the baron to make his nuptials imposing and magnificent. The chapel belonging to the castle, which had been allowed to fall into a most neglected condition, was put into order, the altar redecorated, and the walls hung with tapestry. Preparations were made in the inner hall for a banquet on the grandest scale, which was to be given after the ceremony; and on a dais in the main hall into which the bride was to be conducted on her arrival were placed two chairs of state, where the baron and his bride were to be seated.

When the day arrived for the wedding, everything was prepared for the reception of the bride. As no hour had been named for her arrival, all persons who were to be engaged in the ceremony were ready in the castle by break of day; and the baron, in a state of great excitement, mounted to the top of the watch-tower, that he might be able to give orders to the rest the moment her cavalcade appeared in sight. Hour after hour passed, but still Teresa did not make her appearance, and at last the baron began to feel considerable anxiety on the subject.

At last a mist, which had been over a part of the valley, cleared up, and all the anxiety of the baron was dispelled; for in the distance he perceived a group of travellers approaching the castle, some mounted on horseback and some on foot. In front rode the bride on a superb white palfrey, her face covered with a thick veil. On each side of her rode an esquire magnificently dressed. Behind her were a waiting woman on horseback and two men-servants; and in the rear were several led mules laden with packages. The baron now quitted his position in the tower and descended to the castle gates to receive his bride. When he arrived there, he found one of the esquires, who had ridden forward at the desire of his mistress, waiting to speak to him.

"I have been ordered," he said to the baron, "by the Lady Teresa, to request that you will be good enough to allow her to change her dress before she meets you."

The baron of course willingly assented, and then retired into the hall destined for the reception ceremony. Shortly afterwards Teresa arrived at the castle, and being helped from her palfrey, she proceeded with her lady in waiting and a female attendant (who had been engaged by the baron) into

her private apartment, while two of the muleteers brought up a large trunk containing her wedding dress.

In less than an hour Teresa left her room to be introduced to the baron, and was conducted into his presence by one of the esquires. As soon as she entered the hall, a cry of admiration arose from all present—so extraordinary was her beauty. The baron, in a state of breathless emotion, advanced to meet her, but before he had reached her she bent on her knee, and remained in that position till he had raised her up. "Kneel not to me, thou lovely one," he said. "It is for all present to kneel to thee in adoration of thy wonderful beauty, rather than for thee to bend to any one." So saying, and holding her hand, he led her to one of the seats on the dais, and then, seating himself by her side, gave orders for the ceremony of introduction to begin. One by one the different persons to be presented were led up to her, all of whom she received with a grace and amiability which raised her very high in their estimation.

When the ceremony of introduction was over the baron ordered that the procession should be formed, and then, taking Teresa by the hand, he led her into the chapel, followed by the others. When all were arranged in their proper places the marriage ceremony was performed by the priest, and the newly-married couple, with the retainers and guests, entered into the banquetting hall. Splendid as was the repast which had been prepared for the company, their attention seemed for some time more drawn to the baron and his bride than to the duties of the feast. A handsomer couple it would have been impossible to find. The baron himself, as has been stated already, had no lack of manly beauty either in face or form; while the loveliness of his bride appeared almost more than mortal. Even their splendid attire seemed to attract little notice when compared with their personal beauty.

After the surprise and admiration had somewhat abated, the feast progressed most satisfactorily. All were in high spirits, and good humour and conviviality reigned throughout the hall. Even on the baron it seemed to produce a kindly effect, so that few who could have seen him at that moment would have imagined him to be the stern, cold-blooded tyrant he really was. His countenance was lighted up with good humour and friendliness. Much as his attention was occupied with his bride, he had still a little to bestow on his guests, and he rose many times from his seat to request the attention of the servants to their wants. At last he cast his eye over the tables as if searching for some person whom he could not see, and he then beckoned to the major domo, who, staff of office in hand, advanced to receive his orders.

"I do not see the esquires of the Lady Teresa in the room," said the baron.

"Your excellency," said the man, "they are not here."

"How is that?" said the baron, with some impatience. "You ought to have found room for them in the hall. Where are they?"

"Your excellency," said the major domo, who from the expression of the baron's countenance evidently expected a storm, "they are not here."



The whole of the suite left the castle immediately after the mules were unladen and her ladyship had left her room. I was inspecting the places which I had prepared for them, when a servant came forward and told me that the esquires and attendants had left the castle. I at once hurried after them and begged they would return, as I was sure your excellency would feel hurt if they did not stay to the banquet. But they told me they had received express orders to leave the castle directly after they had seen the Lady Teresa lodged safely in it. I again entreated them to stay, but it was useless. They hurried on their way, and I returned by myself."

"The ill-bred hounds!" said the baron, in anger. "A sound scourging would have taught them better manners."

"Do not be angry with them," said Teresa, laying her hand gently on that of her husband's; "they did but obey their master's orders."

"Some day, I swear," said the baron, "I will be revenged on their master for this insult, miserable churl that he is!"

He had no sooner uttered these words than he looked round him for the sparrow, but the bird did not make its appearance. Possibly its absence alarmed him even more than its presence would have done, for he began to dread lest the vengeance of the astrologer was about to fall on him, without giving him the usual notice. Teresa, perceiving the expression of his countenance, did all in her power to calm him, but for some time she but partially succeeded. He continued to glance anxiously about him, to ascertain, if possible, from which side the blow might come. He was just on the point of raising a goblet to his lips, when the idea seized him that the wine might be poisoned. He declined to touch food for the same reason. The idea of being struck with death when at the height of his happiness seemed to overwhelm him. Thanks, however, to the kind soothing of Teresa, as well as the absence of any visible effects of the Innominato's anger, he at last became completely reassured, and the feast proceeded.

Long before the banquet had concluded the baron and his wife quitted the hall and retired through their private apartments to the terrace of the castle. The evening, which was now rapidly advancing, was warm and genial, and not a cloud was to be seen in the atmosphere. For some time they walked together up and down on the terrace; and afterwards they seated themselves on a bench. There, with his arm round her waist and her head leaning on his shoulder, they watched the sun in all his magnificence sinking behind the mountains. The sun had almost disappeared, when the baron took his wife's hand in his.

"How cold thou art, my dear!" he said to her. "Let us go in."

Teresa made no answer, but rising from her seat was conducted by her husband into the room which opened on to the terrace, and which was lighted by a large brass lamp which hung by a chain from the ceiling. When they were nearly under the lamp, whose light increased as the daylight declined, Conrad again cast his arm round his wife, and fondly pressed her head to his breast. They remained thus for some moments, entranced in their happiness.

"Dost thou really love me, Teresa?" asked the baron.

"Love you?" said Teresa, now burying her face in his bosom. "Love you? Yes, dearer than all the world. My very existence hangs on your life. When that ceases my existence ends."

When she had uttered these words, Conrad, in a state of intense happiness, said to her—

"Kiss me, my beloved."

Teresa still kept her face pressed on his bosom; and Conrad, to overcome her coyness, placed his hand on her head and gently pressed it backwards, so that he might kiss her.

He stood motionless, aghast with horror, for the light of the lamp above their heads showed him no longer the angelic features of Teresa, but the hideous face of a corpse that had remained some time in the tomb, and whose only sign of vitality was a horrible phosphoric light which shone in its eyes. Conrad now tried to rush from the room, and to scream for assistance—but in vain. With one arm she clasped him tightly round the waist, and raising the other, she placed her clammy hand upon his mouth, and threw him with great force upon the floor. Then seizing the side of his neck with her lips, she deliberately and slowly sucked from him his life's blood; while he, utterly incapable either of moving or crying, was yet perfectly conscious of the awful fate that was awaiting him.

In this manner Conrad remained for some hours in the arms of his vampire wife. At last faintness came over him, and he grew insensible. The sun had risen some hours before consciousness returned. He rose from the ground horror-stricken and pallid, and glanced fearfully around him to see if Teresa were still there; but he found himself alone in the room. For some minutes he remained undecided what step to take. At last he rose from his chair to leave the apartment, but he was so weak he could scarcely drag himself along. When he left the room he bent his steps towards the courtyard. Each person he met saluted him with the most profound respect, while on the countenance of each was visible an expression of intense surprise, so altered was he from the athletic young man they had seen him the day before. Presently he heard the merry laughter of a number of children, and immediately hastened to the spot from whence the noise came. To his surprise he found his wife Teresa, in full possession of her beauty, playing with several children, whose mothers had brought them to see her, and who stood delighted with the condescending kindness of the baroness towards their little ones.

Conrad remained motionless for some moments, gazing with intense surprise at his wife, and the idea occurred to him that the events of the last night must have been a terrible dream and nothing more. But he was at a loss how to account for his bodily weakness? Teresa, in the midst of her gambols with the children, accidentally raised her head and perceived her husband. She uttered a slight cry of pleasure when she saw him, and snatching up in her arms a beautiful child she had been playing with, she rushed towards him, exclaiming—

"Look, dear Conrad, what a little beauty this is! Is he not a little cherub?"

The whole of the suite left the castle immediately after the mules were unladen and her ladyship had left her room. I was inspecting the places which I had prepared for them, when a servant came forward and told me that the esquires and attendants had left the castle. I at once hurried after them and begged they would return, as I was sure your excellency would feel hurt if they did not stay to the banquet. But they told me they had received express orders to leave the castle directly after they had seen the Lady Teresa lodged safely in it. I again entreated them to stay, but it was useless. They hurried on their way, and I returned by myself."

"The ill-bred hounds!" said the baron, in anger. "A sound scourging would have taught them better manners."

"Do not be angry with them," said Teresa, laying her hand gently on that of her husband's; "they did but obey their master's orders."

"Some day, I swear," said the baron, "I will be revenged on their master for this insult, miserable churl that he is!"

He had no sooner uttered these words than he looked round him for the sparrow, but the bird did not make its appearance. Possibly its absence alarmed him even more than its presence would have done, for he began to dread lest the vengeance of the astrologer was about to fall on him, without giving him the usual notice. Teresa, perceiving the expression of his countenance, did all in her power to calm him, but for some time she but partially succeeded. He continued to glance anxiously about him, to ascertain, if possible, from which side the blow might come. He was just on the point of raising a goblet to his lips, when the idea seized him that the wine might be poisoned. He declined to touch food for the same reason. The idea of being struck with death when at the height of his happiness seemed to overwhelm him. Thanks, however, to the kind soothing of Teresa, as well as the absence of any visible effects of the Innominato's anger, he at last became completely reassured, and the feast proceeded.

Long before the banquet had concluded the baron and his wife quitted the hall and retired through their private apartments to the terrace of the castle. The evening, which was now rapidly advancing, was warm and genial, and not a cloud was to be seen in the atmosphere. For some time they walked together up and down on the terrace; and afterwards they seated themselves on a bench. There, with his arm round her waist and her head leaning on his shoulder, they watched the sun in all his magnificence sinking behind the mountains. The sun had almost disappeared, when the baron took his wife's hand in his.

"How cold thou art, my dear!" he said to her. "Let us go in."

Teresa made no answer, but rising from her seat was conducted by her husband into the room which opened on to the terrace, and which was lighted by a large brass lamp which hung by a chain from the ceiling. When they were nearly under the lamp, whose light increased as the daylight declined, Conrad again cast his arm round his wife, and fondly pressed her head to his breast. They remained thus for some moments, entranced in their happiness.

"Dost thou really love me, Teresa?" asked the baron.

"Love you?" said Teresa, now burying her face in his bosom. "Love you? Yes, dearer than all the world. My very existence hangs on your life. When that ceases my existence ends."

When she had uttered these words, Conrad, in a state of intense happiness, said to her—

"Kiss me, my beloved."

Teresa still kept her face pressed on his bosom ; and Conrad, to overcome her coyness, placed his hand on her head and gently pressed it backwards, so that he might kiss her.

He stood motionless, aghast with horror, for the light of the lamp above their heads showed him no longer the angelic features of Teresa, but the hideous face of a corpse that had remained some time in the tomb, and whose only sign of vitality was a horrible phosphoric light which shone in its eyes. Conrad now tried to rush from the room, and to scream for assistance—but in vain. With one arm she clasped him tightly round the waist, and raising the other, she placed her clammy hand upon his mouth, and threw him with great force upon the floor. Then seizing the side of his neck with her lips, she deliberately and slowly sucked from him his life's blood ; while he, utterly incapable either of moving or crying, was yet perfectly conscious of the awful fate that was awaiting him.

In this manner Conrad remained for some hours in the arms of his vampire wife. At last faintness came over him, and he grew insensible. The sun had risen some hours before consciousness returned. He rose from the ground horror-stricken and pallid, and glanced fearfully around him to see if Teresa were still there ; but he found himself alone in the room. For some minutes he remained undecided what step to take. At last he rose from his chair to leave the apartment, but he was so weak he could scarcely drag himself along. When he left the room he bent his steps towards the courtyard. Each person he met saluted him with the most profound respect, while on the countenance of each was visible an expression of intense surprise, so altered was he from the athletic young man they had seen him the day before. Presently he heard the merry laughter of a number of children, and immediately hastened to the spot from whence the noise came. To his surprise he found his wife Teresa, in full possession of her beauty, playing with several children, whose mothers had brought them to see her, and who stood delighted with the condescending kindness of the baroness towards their little ones.

Conrad remained motionless for some moments, gazing with intense surprise at his wife, and the idea occurred to him that the events of the last night must have been a terrible dream and nothing more. But he was at a loss how to account for his bodily weakness? Teresa, in the midst of her gambols with the children, accidentally raised her head and perceived her husband. She uttered a slight cry of pleasure when she saw him, and snatching up in her arms a beautiful child she had been playing with, she rushed towards him, exclaiming—

"Look, dear Conrad, what a little beauty this is! Is he not a little cherub?"

The baron gazed wildly at his wife for a few moments, but said nothing.

"My dearest husband, what ails you?" said Teresa. "Are you not well?"

Conrad made no answer, but turning suddenly round staggered hurriedly away, while Teresa, with an expression of alarm and anxiety on her face, followed him with her eyes as he went. He still hurried on till he reached the small sitting-room from which he was accustomed each morning to issue his orders to his dependants, and seated himself in a chair to recover if possible from the bewilderment he was in. Presently Ludovico, whose duty it was to attend on his master every morning for instructions, entered the room, and bowing respectfully to the baron, stood silently aside, waiting till he should be spoken to, but during the time marking the baron's altered appearance with the most intense curiosity. After some moments the baron asked him what he saw to make him stare in that manner.

"Pardon my boldness, your excellency," said Ludovico, "but I was afraid you might be ill. I trust I am in error."

"What should make you think I am unwell?" inquired the baron.

"Your highness's countenance is far paler than usual, and there is a small wound on the side of your throat. I hope you have not injured yourself."

The last remark of Ludovico decided the baron that the events of the evening had been no hallucination. What stronger proof could be required than the marks of his vampire wife's teeth still upon him? He perceived that some course of action must be at once decided upon, and the urgency of his position aided him to concentrate his thoughts. He determined on visiting a celebrated anchorite who lived in the mountains about four leagues distant, and who was famous not only for the piety of his life, but for his power in exorcising evil spirits. Having come to this resolution, he desired Ludovico immediately to saddle for him a sure-footed mule, as the path to the anchorite's dwelling was not only difficult but dangerous.

Ludovico bowed, and after having been informed that there were no other orders, he left the room, wondering in his mind what could be the reason for his master's wishing a mule saddled, when he generally rode only the highest-spirited horses. The conclusion he came to was, that the baron must have been attacked with some serious illness, and was about to proceed to some skilful leech.

As soon as Ludovico had left the room, the baron called to one of the servants whom he saw passing, and ordered breakfast to be brought to him immediately, hoping that by a hearty meal he should recover sufficient strength for the journey he was about to undertake. To a certain extent he succeeded, though possibly it was from the quantity of wine he drank, rather than from any other cause, for he had no appetite and had eaten but little.

He now descended into the courtyard of the castle, cautiously avoiding his wife. Finding the mule in readiness, he mounted it and started on his journey. For some time he went along quietly and slowly, for he still felt weak and languid, but as he attained a higher elevation of the mountains, the cold breeze seemed to invigorate him. He now began to consider how he could rid himself of the horrible vampire he had married, and of whose real



nature he had no longer any doubt. Speculations on this subject occupied him till he had entered on a narrow path on the slope of an exceedingly high mountain. It was difficult to keep footing, and it required all his caution to prevent himself from falling. Of fear, however, the baron had none; and his thoughts continued to run on the possibility of separating himself from Teresa, and on what vengeance he would take on the Innominato for the treachery he had practised on him, as soon as he should be fairly freed. The more he dwelt on his revenge, the more excited he became, till at last he exclaimed aloud, "Infamous wretch! Let me be but once fairly released from the execrable fiend you have imposed upon me, and I swear I will burn thee alive in thy castle, as a fitting punishment for the sorcery thou hast practised."

Conrad had hardly uttered these words, when the pathway upon which he was riding gave way beneath him, and glided down the incline into a tremendous precipice below. He succeeded in throwing himself from his mule, which, with the *débris* of the rocks, was hurried over the precipice, while he clutched with the energy of despair at each object he saw likely to give him a moment's support. But everything he touched gave way, and he gradually sank and sank towards the verge of the precipice, his efforts to save himself becoming more violent the nearer he approached to what appeared certain death. Down he sank, till his legs actually hung over the precipice, when he succeeded in grasping a stone somewhat firmer than the others, thus retarding his fall for a moment. In horror he now glanced at the terrible chasm beneath him, when suddenly different objects came before his mind with fearful reality. There was an unhappy peasant, who had without permission killed a head of game, hanging from the branch of a tree, still struggling in the agonies of death, while his wife and children were in vain imploring the baron's clemency.

This vanished and he saw a boy with a knife in his hand, stabbing at his own mother for some slight offence she had given him.

This passed, and he found himself in a small village, the inhabitants of which were all dead within their houses; for at the approach of winter he had, in a fit of ill-temper, ordered his retainers to take from them all their provisions; and a snowstorm coming on immediately afterwards, they were blocked up in their dwellings, and all perished.

Again his thoughts reverted to the position he was in, and his eye glanced over the terrible precipice that yawned beneath him, when he saw, as if in a dream, the house of Biffi the farmer, with his wife and children around him, apparently contented and happy.

As soon as he had realized the idea, the stone which he had clutched began to give way, and all seemed lost to him, when a sparrow suddenly flew on the earth a short distance from him, and immediately afterwards darted away. "Save but my life!" screamed the baron, "and I swear I will keep all secret."

The words had hardly been uttered, when a goatherd with a long staff in his hand appeared on the incline above him. The man perceiving the imminent peril of the baron, with great caution, and yet with great activity,

descended to assist him. He succeeded in reaching a ledge of rock a few feet above, and rather to the side of the baron, to whom he stretched forth the long mountain staff in his hand. The baron clutched it with such energy as would certainly have drawn the goatherd over with him, had it not been that the latter was a remarkably powerful man. With some difficulty the baron reached the ledge of the rock, and the goatherd then ascended to a higher position, and in like manner drew the baron on, till at last he had contrived to get him to a place of safety. As soon as Conrad found himself out of danger, he gazed wildly around him for a moment, then dizziness came over him, and he sank fainting on the ground.

When the baron had recovered his senses, he found himself so weak that it would have been impossible for him to have reached the castle that evening. He therefore willingly accompanied the goatherd to his hut in the mountains, where he proposed to pass the night. The man made what provision he could for his illustrious guest, and prepared him a supper of the best his hut afforded; but had the latter been composed of the most exquisite delicacies, it would have been equally tasteless; for Conrad had not the slightest appetite. Evening was now rapidly approaching, and the goatherd prepared a bed of leaves, over which he threw a cloak, and the baron, utterly exhausted, reposed on it for the night, without anything occurring to disturb his rest.

Next morning he found himself somewhat refreshed by his night's rest, and he prepared to return to the castle, assisted by the goatherd, to whom he had promised a handsome reward. He had now given up all idea of visiting the anchorite, dreading that by so doing he might excite the animosity of the Innominato, of whose tremendous power he had lately received more than ample proof. In due time he reached home in safety, and the goatherd was dismissed after having received the promised reward. On entering the castle-yard the baron found his wife in a state of great alarm and sorrow, and surrounded by the retainers. No sooner did she perceive her husband, than, uttering a cry of delight and surprise, she rushed forward to clasp him in her arms; but the baron pushed her rudely away, and hurrying forwards, directed his steps to the room in which he was accustomed to issue his orders. Ludovico, having heard of the arrival of his master, immediately waited on him.

"Ludovico," said the baron, as soon as he saw him, "I want you to execute an order for me with great promptitude and secrecy. Go below, and prepare two good horses for a journey; one for you, the other for myself. See that we take with us provisions and equipments for two or three days. As soon as they are in readiness, leave the castle with them without speaking to any one, and wait for me about a league up the mountain, where in less than two hours I will join you. Now see that you faithfully carry out my orders, and if you do so, I assure you you will lose nothing by your obedience."

Ludovico left the baron's presence to execute his order, when immediately afterwards a servant came into the room, and inquired if the Lady Teresa might enter.

"Tell your mistress," said the baron, in a tone of great courtesy and

kindness, "that I hope she will excuse me for the moment, as I am deeply engaged in affairs of importance; but I shall await her visit with great impatience in the afternoon."

The baron now left to himself, began to draw out more fully the plan for his future operations. He resolved to visit his brother Hermann, and consult him as to what steps he ought to take in this horrible emergency; and in case no better means presented themselves, he determined on offering to give up to Hermann the castle of Gardonal and the whole valley of the Engadin, on condition of receiving from him an annuity sufficient to support him in the position he had always been accustomed to maintain. He then intended to retire to some distant country, where there would be no probability of his being followed by the horrible monster whom he had accepted as his wife. Of course he had no intention of receiving Teresa in the afternoon, and he had merely put off her visit for the purpose of allowing himself to escape with greater convenience from the castle.

About an hour after Ludovico had left him, the baron quitted the castle by a postern, with as much haste as his enfeebled strength would allow, and hurried after his retainer, whom he found waiting him with the horses. The baron immediately mounted one, and, followed by Ludovico, took the road to his brother's, where in three days he arrived in safety. Hermann received his brother with great pleasure, though much surprised at the alteration in his appearance.

"My dear Conrad," he said to him, "what can possibly have occurred to you? You look very pale, weak, and haggard. Have you been ill?"

"Worse, a thousand times worse," said Conrad. "Let us go where we may be by ourselves, and I will tell you all."

Hermann led his brother into a private room, where Conrad explained to him the terrible misfortune which had befallen him. Hermann listened attentively, and for some time could not help doubting whether his brother's mind was not affected; but Conrad explained everything in so circumstantial and lucid a manner as to dispel that idea. To the proposition which Conrad made, to make over the territory of the Engadin Valley for an annuity, Hermann promised to give full consideration. At the same time, before any further steps were taken in the matter, he advised Conrad to visit a villa he had, on the sea-shore, about ten miles distant from Genoa; where, in quiet and seclusion, he would be able to recover his energies.

Conrad thanked his brother for his advice, and willingly accepted the offer. Two days afterwards he started on the journey, and by the end of the week arrived safely, and without difficulty, at the villa.

On the evening of his arrival, Conrad, who had employed himself during the afternoon in visiting the different apartments as well as the grounds surrounding the villa, was seated at a window overlooking the sea. The evening was deliciously calm, and he felt such ease and security as he had not enjoyed for some time past. The sun was sinking in the ocean, and the moon began to appear, and the stars one by one to shine in the cloudless heavens. The thought crossed Conrad's mind that the sight of the sun sinking in the waters strongly resembled his own position when he fell over the precipice. The

thought had hardly been conceived when some one touched him on the shoulder. He turned round, and saw standing before him, in the full majesty of her beauty—his wife Teresa!

"My dearest Conrad," she said, with much affection in her tone, "why have you treated me in this cruel manner? It was most unkind in you to leave me suddenly without giving the slightest hint of your intentions."

"Execrable fiend," said Conrad, springing from his chair, "leave me! Why do you haunt me in this manner?"

"Do not speak so harshly to me, my dear husband," said Teresa. "To oblige you I was taken from my grave; and on you now my very existence depends."

"Rather my death," said Conrad. "One night more such as we passed, and I should be a corpse."

"Nay, dear Conrad," said Teresa; "I have the power of indefinitely prolonging your life. Drink but of this," she continued, taking from the table behind her a silver goblet, "and to-morrow all ill effects will have passed away."

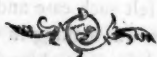
Conrad mechanically took the goblet from her hand, and was on the point of raising it to his lips when he suddenly stopped, and with a shudder replaced it again on the table.

"It is blood," he said.

"True, my dear husband," said Teresa; "what else could it be? My life is dependent on your life's blood, and when that ceases so does my life. Drink then, I implore you," she continued, again offering him the goblet. "Look, the sun has already sunk beneath the wave; a minute more and daylight will have gone. Drink, Conrad, I implore you, or this night will be your last."

Conrad again took the goblet from her hand to raise it to his lips; but it was impossible, and he placed it on the table. A ray of pure moonlight now penetrated the room, as if to prove that the light of day had fled. Teresa, again transformed into a horrible vampire, flew at her husband, and throwing him on the floor, fastened her teeth on the half-healed wound in his throat. The next morning, when the servants entered the room, they found the baron a corpse on the floor; but Teresa was nowhere to be seen, nor was she ever heard of afterwards.

Little more remains to be told. Hermann took possession of the castle of Gardonal and the Valley of the Engadin, and treated his vassals with even more despotism than his brother had done before him. At last, driven to desperation, they rose against him and slew him; and the valley afterwards became absorbed into the Canton of the Grisons.



## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

## PART III.—HIS MANHOOD.

## CHAPTER IV.

DR. ANDERSON IS GATHERED TO HIS FATHERS.

BUT now that Falconer had a ground, even thus shadowy, for hoping—I cannot say believing—that his father might be in London, he could not return to Aberdeen. Moray, who had no heart to hunt for his mother, left the next day by the steamer. Falconer took to wandering about labyrinthine London, and in a couple of months knew more about the metropolis—the west end excepted—than most people who had lived their lives in it. The west end is no doubt a considerable exception to make, but Falconer sought only his father, and the west end was the place where he was least likely to find him. Day and night he wandered into all sorts of places: the worse they looked the more attractive he found them. It became almost a monomania with him. It was with difficulty he could pass a dirty court or low-browed archway. He *might* be there. Or he might have been there. Or it was such a place as he would be likely to choose to shelter in. For Falconer had the strongest suspicion that his father was not beyond the reach of the law. He knew to what such a life as his must have tended. At first he was attracted only by tall elderly men. Such a man he would sometimes follow till his following made him turn and demand his object. If there was no suspicion of Scotch in his tone, Falconer, who could depend upon his ear, was satisfied, and easily apologized. If there was, he made such replies as would lead to a certain show, as he believed, of some kind of feeling, if only of uneasy surprise. He could not in the least defend the reasonableness of the course he was adopting, if indeed he could be said to be adopting a course into which he seemed to himself to be driven: it had not the shadow of a probability upon its side. Still the greatest successes the world has ever beheld had been at one time the greatest improbabilities. He could not choose but go on.

Neither could a man like Falconer long confine his interest to this immediate object, especially after he had, in the course of his wandering, found opportunity of being useful to one or two whose description did not in the least correspond to that of the man he was seeking. This soon widened largely his relations and duties, and while he still made it his main object to find his father, that became a centre from which went forth a thousand efforts and influences operating upon those who were as sheep that had no shepherd. This was indeed just a falling back into his old ways at Aberdeen, only with a boundless sphere to work in, and with the hope of finding his father to hearten him to it. How he worked will come out better



by and by. Especially he haunted the streets at night, went into all places of entertainment, often to the disgust of senses and soul, and made his way into a knowledge of the lowest forms of life in London without introducer or guide. There was a certain stately air of the hills about him which vulgar eyes mistook for country inexperience, and men thought in consequence to make gain or game of him as the case might be. But such found out their mistake, if not soon, then the more completely; and Falconer found that a straightforward, fearless, friendly behaviour wrought its way amongst the lowest of his brethren as certainly, if not so rapidly, as amongst those of an ordinary spiritual and moral development. Far from provoking or even meeting hostility, those who offered it to him found, if they persisted in it, that the procedure was a dangerous one. For two years he continued to move about London in this manner, not making his profession the centre, but only the accident of his operations. Before that period was over he was well known amongst the poor of a large district, especially on both sides of Shoreditch.

But one morning he received a letter from Dr. Anderson which occasioned his immediate departure for Aberdeen. Until now, his friend, who was, entirely satisfied with his mode of life, and supplied him freely with money, had not even expressed a wish to recall him, though he had often spoken of visiting him in London. It now appeared that, unwilling to cause Falconer any needless anxiety, he had abstained from mentioning the fact that his health had been for some time declining. But he had got suddenly worse, and now wrote to ask Falconer to go to him. Falconer did not delay his obedience to the summons. It was with a heavy heart that he walked up to the hospitable door, recalling, as he ascended the steps, how he had stood there a helpless youth, who for want of a few pounds was doomed to another long year's labour before his fate should be decided, and how this friendly power had stepped in to aid him and bid him God-speed on the path he desired to follow. In a moment more he was shown into his study. But he was not there.

"Isn't your master up yet, Johnston?" asked he with alarm, for it was two o'clock.

"No, sir," answered Johnston, with a very solemn look. "He's no up yet. He's been desperate efter seein' ye, sir. I maun jist gang an' lat him ken 'at ye're here at last. But eh, sir!" added he, turning once more with the tears in his eyes, "ye'll hardly ken 'im. He's that changed!"

To Falconer's surprise Johnston left the study by the door which led to the cottage-room, and returning a moment after, invited him to enter. There, in the bed in the recess—the room unchanged, with its deal table, and its sanded floor—lay the form of Dr. Anderson. Falconer hastened to the bedside, kneeled down, and taking the hand of his friend in his own, did not speak a word, but gazed in his face. Dr. Anderson was silent likewise, but a smile almost like a woman's overspread his countenance and showed his inward satisfaction. Robert's eyes filled as he looked on the worn countenance before him, where the prominence of the bones gave through the physical weakness a new impression of moral strength. At last Robert spoke.

"What for didna ye sen' for me afore?" he said. "Ye never tellt me 'at ye was ailin'."

"Because I knew you were doing good, Robert, my boy; and I have done so little good in my lifetime that I had no right to interrupt the good another man was doing. I have done next to nothing. I wonder if God will give me another chance somewhere. I would fain do better. I don't think I *could* sit singing psalms to all eternity." And he smiled as he spoke.

"I ken no man 'at's done mair," said Robert. "Whatever good I may be able to do afore my turn comes, I hae you to thank for 't. Eh, doctor, gin it hadna been for you!"

Here Robert's feelings overcame him, and he could not speak for some time. At length he resumed, brokenly,

"Ye gae me a man to believe in, whan my ain father had forsaken me, and my frien' had gane awa' to God. Ye hae made me, doctor—wi' meat an' drink an' learnin' an' siller, an' a' thing at ance, ye hae made me. And God only knows how much ye've dune to set me free frae the doobts and miseries that pressed upo' me, to gie me a glad life in his licht, strength to work for men, and hope for the future o' us a'."

"Eh Robert!" said the dying man, half rising on his elbow, while his eye flashed—"to think what God maks us a' to ane anither! My father did ten times for me what I hae dune for you—and to think that I may see him afore a week's ower, jist maks a bairn o' me again."

As the doctor spoke, the polish of his speech was gone, and the social refinement of his countenance with it. The face of his ancestors, the noble, sensitive, heart-full, but rugged, bucolic, and weather-beaten through centuries of windy ploughing, hail-stormed sheep-keeping, long-paced seed-sowing, and multiform labour, surely not less honourable in the sight of the working God than the fighting of the noble, came back in the face of the dying physician; and from that hour to his death he spoke the rugged dialect of his fathers.

"I dinna ken," he said, a day or two after this, as Robert sat by his bedside, "whether it's richt; but I hae nae fear o' deith, an' yet I canna say I'm sure aboot onything. I hae seen mony a ane dee that culd hae no faith in the Saviour; but I never saw that fear that some gude fowk wad hae ye believe maun come at the last. I wadna like to tak' to ony papistry; but I never culd mak' oot frae the Bible—and I hae read mair at it i' the jungle than maybe ye wad think—that it was a' ower wi' a body at their deith. I never heard them bring foret ony text but ane—the maist ridiculous hash 'at ever ye heard—to justifee 't."

"I ken the text ye mean—'As the tree falleth so it shall lie,' or something like that—at they say King Solomon wrote, though better scholars say his tree had fa'en mony a lang year afore that text saw the licht. I dinna believe sic a thocht was i' the man's heid whan he wrote it. It is as ye say, jist ower contemptible to ca' an argument. I'll read it to ye ance mair."

Robert got his Bible, and read the following portion from that wonderful book, so little understood, so full of truth and wisdom, the Book of Ecclesiastes:—

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

"Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

"Ay, ay; that's it," said Dr. Anderson. "Weel, I maun say again that they're ill aff for an argument that taks that for ane upo' sic a momentous subjec'. I prefer to say, wi' the same auld man, that I know not the works of God who maketh all. But I wish I could say that I believed onything for certain sure. But whan I think aboot it—wad ye believe 't? the faith o' my father's mair to me nor ony faith o' my ain. That sounds strange. But it's this. I'm positeeve that that godly great auld man kent mair aboot a' thae things—I culd see 't i' the face o' 'm—nor ony ither man 'at ever I kent. An' it's no by comparison only. I'm sure he did ken. There was something atween God and him. An' I think he wasna likly to be wrang. An' sae I tak' courage to believe as muckle as I can, though may be no sae muckle as I fain wad believe."

Robert, who by experience of himself, and the observations he had already made by the bedsides of not a few dying men and women, knew well that nothing but the truth itself can carry its own conviction; that the words of our Lord are a body as it were in which the spirit of our Lord dwells, or rather the key that can open the heart to the entrance of that spirit, turned from even such argumentation as they had already had to those words of which the speaker himself had said, "They are spirit and they are life." For if that man spoke true, what folly is it to buttress life and spirit with other powers than their own!"

Therefore, from that day to the very last, as often and as long as the dying man was able to listen to him, he read from the glad news just the words of the Lord. As he was thus reading one morning, the doctor broke in with:

"Eh, Robert, the patience o' him! He didna quench the smokin' flax. There's little fire aboot me, but surely I ken in my ain her some o' the risin' smoke o' the sacrifice. Sic words as they are! An' he was gaein' doon to the grave himsel', less nor half my age, as peacefu', though the road was so rough, as gin he was gaein' hame till's father."

"Sae he was," returned Robert.

"Ay; but here am I lyin' upo' my bed, slippin' easy awa. An' there was he——"

He did not finish his sentence. The sacred story seemed to him too sacred for speech. He was silent for a while, and Robert sat with the New Testament lying open before him on the bed. Again Dr. Anderson took up the word:

"The mair the words o' Jesus come into me, the surer I feel o' seein' my auld Brahmin frien' again, Robert. It's true his religion seemed not only to begin, but to end, inside him. It was a' a booin' doon afore and an aspirin' up into the bosom o' the infinite God. I dinna mean to say 'at he wasna honourable to them aboot him. And I never saw in him muckle o' that pride to the lower castes that belangs to the character o' the Brahmin. It was in him raither a stately kin'ness than that condescension which is the vice o' Christians o' rank i' this country. But he had naething to do wi' them. The first comman'ment was a' he kent. He loved God—nae a God like Jesus Christ, but the God he kent—and that was a' he could. The second co'mman'ment—that glorious recognition o' the divine in humanity making it fit and needfu' to be loved, that claim o' God to his ain existence i' the human race, that love o' the neebour as yer'sel—he didna ken. Still there was religion in him; and he who died for the sins o' the whole world wad surely be revealed to him efterwards, that throu' the knowledge o' him he micht indeed dwell in that God efter whom he had aspired."

During the years in which Robert and the doctor had laboured together amongst the poor, they had had many talks, and Robert had done much to bring about this hopeful outlook in the good man's mind.

"Did ye never try," he asked, "to lat him ken aboot the comin' o' God to his world in Jesus Christ?"

"I couldna do muckle honestly, because my ain faith was sae poor and sma'. But I tellt him what the Christian world believed. I tried to show him something o' the character and history o' the man. But it didna seem to tak' muckle hauld o' him. It wasna interestin' till him. The only interest he showed was ane whan I tellt him some things He had said aboot his relation to God—sic as, 'I and my Father are one,'—and aboot the relation o' a' his disciples to God and himsel'—'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' Then he said, wi' a smile, 'The man was a good Brahmin.'"

"It's verra wonderfu'," said Robert, "hoo little the one great commandment can do without the other—hoo little we can ken what God to love, or hoo to love him, without 'thy neighbour as thyself.' Ony ane o' them without the ither stan's like the ae factor o' a multiplication, or ae wing upo' a laverock (*lark*)."

Towards the close of the week, which the doctor had set as the probable limit of his life, he grew much weaker. In the middle of the night, for Falconer scarcely left his room, he called him, and said,

"My time's near, I'm thinkin'; for, wakin' an' sleepin', I'm a bairn again. I can hardly believe whiles 'at my father hasna a grup o' my han'. A meenute ago I was travellin' throu' a terrible driftin' o' snaw—eh, hoo it whistled and sang! and the cauld o' 't was stingin'; but my father had a grup o' me, an' I jist despised it, an' was stampin' 't doon wi' my wee bit feet, for I was

like seven year auld or thereabouts. An' syne I thoct I heard my mither singin', and kent by that that the ither was a dream. I'm thinkin' a hantle 'll luik dreamy afore lang. Eh! I wonner what the final waukin' 'll be like." Then after a pause he resumed: "Robert, my dear boy, ye 're i' the richt gait. Haud on an' lat naething turn ye aside. Man, it's a great comfort to me to think that ye're my ain flesh and blude, an' nae that far aff. My father an' your great-gran'father upo' the gran'mither's side war ain brithers. I wonner hoo far doon it wad gang. Ye're the only ane, by yer gran'mither, and yer father, gin he be alive, that I hae sib to me. Ye'll fin' by my will—its i' the bottom drawer upo' the left han' i' my writin' table i' the leebrary—that I hae left ye ilka plack 'at I possess. Only there's ae thing that I want ye to do. First o' a', ye maun gang on as yer doin' in London for ten year mair. Maybe—an' gin deen' men hae ony o' that foresicht that's been attrebuted to them in a' ages, it's borne in upo' me that ye *will* see yer father again. An' at a' events, ye'll be helpin' some ill-faured sows to a clean face and a bonny. But gin ye dinna fa' in wi' yer father within ten year, ye maun behaud a wee, an' jist pack up yer box, an' gang awa' ower the sea to Calcutta, an' du what I hae tellt ye to do i' that wull. I bind ye by nae promise, Robert, an' I winna hae nane. Things micht happen to put ye in a terrible difficulty wi' a promise. I'm only tellin ye what I wad like. Especially gin ye hae fund yer father, ye maun gang by yer ain jeedgment about it, for there 'll be a hantle to do wi' him efter ye hae gotten a grup o' 'im. An' noo, I maun lie still, an' may be sleep again, for I hae spoken ower muckle."

It had been a long utterance for a dying man, but it was broken by many pauses for breath and strength. Hoping that he would fall asleep again, Robert sat quite still; and not till an hour, as nearly as he could judge, was over, did he move to approach the bed. Hearing no sound of his breathing, he was alarmed, and brought the light near, but saw that, although hitherto he had had much oppression, he now lay breathing like a child. There was no sign save of past suffering upon his countenance: it was as peaceful as if he had already entered into his rest. Robert withdrew, and again seated himself in the chair which had been placed for the watcher. And while he sat in silence, the great universe became to him as a bird brooding over the breaking shell of the one dying man on the couch. He thought how our vision lies between two births, of each of which, as of the moon, we see but one half. We are on the outside of the one birth, waiting for the appearance of a life from the unknown mystery of being that surrounds us; we are on the inside of the other birth, watching the passing of a spirit that has been carried in the womb of the world, and has been brought to the birth through a thousand perplexities and pains, out beyond our sight into the unknown. Not seeing it from the same side, we forget that what we see is but the other side of a birth, and we call it death; but to the region whither he is going, the man enters as a thing newly born. The body he leaves behind is but the *placenta* by which he drew his nourishment, animal, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, from his mother Earth, in so far as she could supply them, though all the time he was in hidden connection with a higher







"ROBERT FALCONER."

brain and a thinking power. And so do the extremes of the two births meet, that, as he drew nigh to the second, the heart of this old man went back as near as his memory could carry him to the first. Had his mother been on the earth, it was on her bosom he would have laid his dying head; and who knows but the living may be near to help the birth of those who are being born into life. As the child is watched for, and a love is being born to meet it, step for step as it is born, so the couch of the dying, as we call them, may be surrounded by the birth-watchers of the world to which this world is but the wind-blown porch. When Dr. Anderson knew that he was dying, as his faithful friend and servant Johnston informed Robert, he removed from the large comfortable chamber to such as which he had been for many years accustomed, and retired into the simulacrum of his father's *benn end*, that he might die with the look of his childhood around him.

How long Falconer sat thinking such things as these, he did not know; but suddenly the doctor spoke. They were low, faint, murmurous sounds that issued from the lips that were nearly at rest for ever—wanted no more for the utterance of this lower region, therefore returning to the holy dust, which yet God weighs with his mountains and hills in his balance; but Robert could hear them because he loved the lips that spoke them.

"Father, father!" he cried quickly, in the tone and words of a Scotch laddie, "I'm gaein' doon. Haud a grup o' my han'."

When Robert hurried to the bedside, he found that it was the last breath out of which those words had been moulded. The right hand lay outside, almost as white as the white sheet on which it lay; and it was partly closed—in the exact shape, or Robert's imagination deceived him, which it would have taken had it been grasping a larger hand. On the face was an expression which he could not at first read. Before it had vanished, he believed he had understood it. It was deep confidence just dashed with apprehension; but the latter slowly melted away, and nothing remained but that awful and wonderful and beautiful peace which Death leaves behind him on most human faces—that of the fretful, peevish, complaining invalid, and that of the strong, brave, God-fearing soldier, whose own limbs have borne him into his embrace.

Robert knelt down and thanked God for the noble man whom he had given to the earth, and had taken away. If he wept when he rose from his knees, it was with gladness over the life *weel won throu*, over the spirit returned to God who gave it, after being long "bet with bitter winds," and meeting them bravely in the face.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### SHARGAR'S MOTHER.

As soon as the funeral was over, in which, according to the custom of Aberdeen—far excelling that of any other city of Great Britain with which I am acquainted—the coffin was borne by twelve stalwart men in black, with broad round *bonnets* on their heads, the one half relieving the other—a privilege of the company of shore-porters, the exequies being thus deprived

of most of that artificial, grotesque, and pagan horror given to them by obscene mutes, by hearse, horses, and ostrich-feathers—as soon as, in the beautiful phrase of the Old Testament, John Anderson was thus gathered to his fathers, Robert went to pay a visit to his grandmother.

Dressed to a point in the same costume in which he had known her from childhood, he found her little altered in appearance. She was one of those who, instead of stooping with age, only settle downwards by the yielding of the spine to the weight of gathering years: she was still as erect as ever, though shorter. Her step was a little feebler, but her voice was as firm, save when she prayed, and then it quavered more. Her face wore the same settled, almost hard repose, as ever; but her behaviour was still more gentle than when he had seen her last. Notwithstanding, however, that time had passed so softly over her form, Robert felt that somehow, he could not tell how, the mist of a separation between her world and the world in which he lived was gathering; that she was, as it were, fading from his sight and presence, like the moon towards “her interlunar cave;” as if her face were gradually turning from him towards the land of light, whence it reflected the radiance, but with the ghostly strange shine that belongs to all reflections, along with their queen in the heavens.

“I hae buried my best frien’ next to yersel’, granny,” said he, when he had taken a chair close by her side, as he had used to sit when he was a boy.

“I trust he’s happy. He was a douce and a weel-behaved man; and ye hae rizzon to respect his memory. Did he dee the deith o’ the richteous, think ye, laddie?”

“I do think that, grannie. He loved God and his Saviour.”

“The Lord be praised!” said Mrs. Falconer. “I had guid houps o’ ’im in ’s latter days. And fowk says he ’s made a rich man o’ ye, Robert?”

“He ’s left me ilka thing, excep’ something till ’s servan’s—wha hae weel deserved it.”

“Eh, Robert! but it’s a terrible snare. Siller’s an awfu’ thing. My puir Anerew never begud to gang the ill gait, till he began to hae ower muckle siller. But it badena lang wi’ him.”

“But it’s no an ill thing itsel’, grannie; for God made siller as weel ’s a’ ither things.”

“He doesna think muckle o’ ’t, though, or he wad gie mair o’ ’t to some fowk. But as ye say, it’s his, and gin ye hae grace to use ’t aricht, it may be made a great blessin’ to yersel’ and ither fowk. But eh, laddie! tak’ guid tent ’at ye ride upo’ the tap o’ ’t, an’ no lat it rise like a muckle jaw (*billow*) ower yer heid; for it’s an awfu’ thing to be droont in riches.”

“Them ’at prays no to be led into temptation hae a chance—haena they, grannie?”

“That hae they, Robert. And to be plain wi’ ye, I haena that muckle fear o’ ye. For I hae heard the kin’ o’ life ’at ye hae been leadin’; and gin God hears prayers, he’s heard mine for you; for, gin ye gang on as ye hae begun, my prayers, like them o’ David the son o’ Jesse, are endit. Gang on, my dear son, gang on to pluck brands frae the burnin’; haud oot a helpin’

han' to ilka son or dauchter o' Adam 'at will tak' a grip o' 't. Be a burnin' an' a shinin' licht, that men may praise, no you, for ye're but clay i' the han's o' the potter, but yer Father in heaven. Tak' the drunkard frae his whusky, the deboshed frae his debosh, the sweirer frae his aiths, the leear frae his lees; and giena ony o' them ower muckle o' yer siller at ance, for fear 'at they grow fat an' kick, an' defy God and you. That's my advice to ye, Robert."

"And I houp I'll be able to haud gey and near till 't, grannie, for it's o' the best. But wha tellt ye what I was aboot in Lonnon?"

"Himsel'."

"Dr. Anderson?"

"Ay, jist himsel'. I hae had letter upo' letter frae 'm aboot you and a' 'at ye was aboot. He keepit me acquaint wi' 't a'."

This fresh proof of his friend's affection touched Robert deeply. It was not that he had not written often to his grandmother, but he had never entered into any detail of his doings, though the thought of her was ever at hand beside the thought of his father.

"Do ye ken, grannie, what's at the hert o' my houps i' the meesery an' degradation that I see frae mornin' to nicht, and aftener yet frae nicht to mornin' i' the back closes and wynds o' the great city?"

"I trust it's the glory o' God, laddie."

"I houp that's no a'thegither wantin', grannie. For I love God wi' a' my hert. But I doobt it's aftener the savin' o' my earthly father nor the glory o' my heavenly ane that I'm thinkin' o'."

Mrs. Falconer heaved a deep sigh.

"God grant ye success, Robert," she said. "But that canna be richt."

"What canna be richt?"

"No to put the glory o' God first."

"Weel, grannie; but a body canna rise to the heicht o' grace a' at ance, nor yet in ten, or twenty year. Maybe gin I do richt, I may be able to come to that or a' be dune. An' efter a', I'm sure I love God mair nor my father. But I canna help thinkin' this, that gin God heardna ae sang o' glory frae this ill-doin' earth o' his, he wadna be nane the waur; but——"

"Hoo ken ye that?" interrupted his grandmother.

"Because he wad be as gude and great and grand as ever."

"Ow ay."

"But what wad come o' my father wantin' his salvation? He can waur want that, remainin' the slave o' iniquity, than God can want his glory. Forby, ye ken there's nae glory to God like the repentin' o' a sinner, just-feein' God, an' sayin' till him—'Father, ye're a' richt, an' I'm a' wrang.' What greater glory can God hae nor that?"

"It's a' true 'at ye say. But still gin God cares for that same glory, ye oucht to think o' that first, afore even the salvation o' yer father."

"Maybe ye're richt, grannie. An' gin it be as ye say—he's promised to lead us into a' trowth, an' he'll lead me into that trowth. But I'm thinkin' it's mair for oor sakes than his ain 'at he cares aboot his glory. I dinna believe 'at he thinks aboot his glory excep' for the sake o' the trowth an' men's herts 'at's deen' for want o' 't."



Mrs. Falconer thought for a moment.

"It may be 'at ye 're richt, laddie; but ye hae a way o' sayin' things 'at 's some fearsome."

"God's nae like a prood man to tak' offence, grannie. There's naething pleases him like the trowth, grannie; an' there's naething displeases him like leein', particularly whan it's by way o' uphaudin' him. He wants nae sic uphaudin'. Noo, ye say things aboot him whiles 'at soun's to me fearsome."

"What kin' o' things are they, laddie?" asked the old lady with offence glooming in the background.

"Sic like as whan ye speyk aboot him as gin he was a puir prood bailey-like body, fu' o' his ain importance, an' ready to be doon upo' onybody 'at didna ca' him by the name o' 's office—ay think-thinkin' aboot 's ain glory; in place o' the quaiet, mighty, gran', self-forgettin', a'-creatin', a'-uphaudin', eternal bein', wha took the form o' man in Christ Jesus, jist that he micht hae 't in 's pooer to beir and be humblet for oor sakes. Eh, grannie! think o' the face o' that man o' sorrows, that never said a hard word to a sinfu' wuman, or a despised publican: was he thinkin' aboot 's ain glory, think ye? An' we hae no richt to say we ken God save in the face o' Christ Jesus. Whatever 's no like Christ is no like God."

"But, laddie, he cam' to saitisfee God's justice for oor sins; to turn aside his wrath an' curse; to reconcile him to us. Sae he cudna be *a'thegither* like God."

"He did naething o' the kin', grannie. It's a' a lee that. He cam' to saitisfee God's justice by giein' him back his bairns; by garrin' them see that God was just; by sendin' them greetin' hame to fa' at his feet, and grip his knees an' say, 'Father, ye 're i' the richt.' He cam' to lift the weicht o' the sins that God had curst aff o' the shooters o' them 'at did them, by makin' them turn agen them, an' be for God an' no for sin. And there isna a word o' reconceelin' God till 's in a' the Testament, for there was no need o' that: it was us that needed to be reconciled to him. An' sae he bore wi' oor sins and carried oor sorrows; for those sins comin' oot in the multitudes—ay and in his ain disciples as weel, caused him no en' o' grief o' mind an' pain o' body, as a'body kens. It wasna his ain sins, for he had nane, but oors, that caused him sufferin'; and he took them awa'—they're vainishin' even noo frae the earth, though it doesna luik like it in Rag-fair or Petticoat-lane. An' for oor sorrows—they jist garred him greit. His richteousness jist annihilates oor guilt, for it's a great gulf that swallows up and destroys 't. And sae he gae his life a ransom for us: and he is the life o' the world. He took oor sins upo' him, for he cam' into the middle o' them an' took them up—by no sleicht o' han', by no quibblin' o' the lawyers, aboot imputin' his richteousness to us, and sic like, which is no to be found i' the Bible at a', though I dinna say that there's no possible meanin' i' the phrase, but he took them and took them awa'; and here am I, grannie, growin' oot o' my sins in consequence, and there are ye, grannie, growin' oot o' yours in consequence, an' haein' nearhan' dune wi' them a'thegither or this time."

"I wis that was true," laddie, "sae far 's I'm concerned. But I carena hoo ye put it," returned his grandmother, bewildered no doubt with this out-

burst, "sae be that ye put him first an' last an' i' the mids' o' a' thing, an' say wi' a' yer hert, 'His will be dune!'"

"Wi' a' my hert, 'his will be dune,' grannie, responded Robert."

"Amen, amen. And, noo, laddie, duv ye think there's ony likliheid that yer father's still i' the body? I dream aboot him whiles sae lifelike that I canna believe that he's deid. But that's a' freits (*superstitions*)."

"Weel, grannie, I haena the least assurance. But I hae the mair houp. Wad ye ken him gin ye saw him?"

"Ken him!" she cried; "I wad ken him gin he had been no to say four, but forty days i' the sepulchre! My ain Anerew! Hoo cud ye speir sic a question, laddie?"

"He maun be sair changed, grannie. He maun be turnin' auld by this time."

"Auld! Sic like 's yersel', laddie.—Hoots, hoots! ye're richt. I am forgettin'. But nanetheless wad I ken him."

"I wis I kent what he was like. I saw him ance, but a' that I min' upo' wad stan' me in ill stead amo' the streets o' Lonnon."

"I doobt that," returned Mrs. Falconer—a form of expression rather oddly indicating sympathetic and somewhat regretful agreement with what has been said. "But," she went on, "I can lat ye see a pictur' o' 'im, though I doobt it winna shaw sae muckle to you as to me. He had it paintit to gie to yer mother upo' their weddin' day. Och hone! She did the like for him; but what cam' o' that ane, I dinna ken."

Mrs. Falconer went into the little closet to the old bureau, and bringing out the miniature, gave it to Robert. It was the portrait of a young man in antiquated blue coat and white waistcoat, looking innocent, and, it must be confessed, dull and uninteresting. It had been painted by a travelling artist, and probably his skill did not reach to expression. It brought to Robert's mind no faintest shadow of recollection. It did not correspond in the smallest degree to what seemed his vague memory, doubtless half imagination, of the tall worn man whom he had seen on that one Sunday afternoon. He could not have a hope that this would give him the slightest aid in finding him of whom it had once been a shadowy resemblance at least.

"Is 't like him, grannie?" he asked.

As if to satisfy herself once more ere she replied to his question, she took the miniature, and gazed at it for some time in silence. Then with a deep hopeless sigh, she said,

"Ay, it's like him; but it's no himsel'. Eh, the bonny broo, an' the smilin' een o' him!—smilin' upo' a'body, an' upo' her maist o' a', till he took to drink, and waur gin waur can be. It was a' siller an' company—company 'at cudna be merry ohn drunken. Verily their lauchter was like the cracklin' o' thorns aneath a pot. Het watter an' whusky was aye the cry efter their denner an' efter their supper; till my puir Anerew tuik till the bare whusky i' the mornin' to fill the ebb o' the toddy. He wad never hae dune as he did but for the whusky. It jist drave oot a' gude and loot in a' ill."

"Wull ye lat me tak' this wi' me, grannie?" said Robert; for though the portrait was useless for identification, it might serve a further purpose.

"Ow ay, tak' it. I dinna want it. I can see him weel wantin' that. But I hae nae houp left 'at ye 'll ever fa' in wi' him."

"God's aye doin' unlikely things, grannie," said Robert, solemnly.

"He's dune a' 'at he can for him, I doobt, already."

"Duv ye think 'at God cudna save a man gin he liket, than, grannie?"

"God can do a' thing. There's nae doobt but by the gift o' his speerit he culd save a' body."

"An' ye think he's nae mercifu' eneuch to do 't?"

"It winna do to meddle wi' fowk's free wull. 'To gar fowk be gude wad be nae gudeness."

"But gin God could actually create the free wull, dinna ye think he cud help it to do richt, withoot ony garrin'? We ken sae little aboot it, grannie! Hoo does his speerit help onybody? Does he *gar* them 'at accep's the offer o' salvation?"

"Na, I canna think that. But he shaws them the trowth in sic a way that they jist canna bide themsel's, but maun turn to him for verra peace an' rist."

"Weel, that's something as I think. An' until I'm sure that a man has had the trowth shawn till him in sic a way 's that, I canna alloo mysel' to think that hooever he may hae sinned, he has finally rejekit the trowth. Gin I kent that a man had seen the trowth as I hae seen 't whiles, and had deeleberately turned his back upo' 't, and said, 'I'll nane o' 't,' than I doobt I wad be maist compelled to alloo that there was nae mair salvation for him, but a certain and fearfu' luikin' for o' judgment and fiery indignation. But I dinna believe that ever man did sae."

"I did a' for him that I kent hoo to do," said Mrs. Falconer. "Nicht an' morning and aften midday prayin' for an' wi' him."

"Maybe ye scunnert him at it, grannie."

She gave a stifled cry of despair, and said—

"Dinna say that, laddie, or ye'll drive me oot o' my min'. God forgie me, gin that be true. I deserve hell mair nor my Anerew."

"But ye see, grannie, supposin' it war sae, that wadna be laid to your account, seein' ye did the best ye kent. But it wad na be forgotten to him. It wad mak' a hantle difference to his sin; it wad be a great excuse for him. And jist think, gin it be fair for ae human being to influence anither a' 'at they can, and that's nae interferin' wi' their free wull—it's impossible to measure what God cud do wi' his speerit winnin' at them frae a' sides, and able to put sic thoughts an' sic pictures into them as we canna think. And it wad a' be true that he tellt them, and the trowth can never be a meddlin' wi' the free wull."

Mrs. Falconer made no reply, but evidently went on thinking.

She was, though not a great reader, yet a good reader. And any book that seemed devout and thoughtful she read gladly. Through some one or other of this sort she must have been instructed about free will, for I do not think such notions could have formed any portion of the religious teachings she had heard. Men in that part of Scotland then believed that the free will of man was only exercised in rejecting, never in accepting

the truth; and that men were saved by the gift of the spirit, given to some and not to others, according to the free will of God, in the exercise of which no reason appreciable by men, or having anything to do with their notions of love or justice, had any share. In the recognition of will and choice in the acceptance of the mercy of God, Mrs. Falconer was then in advance of her time. And it is no wonder if her notions did not all hang logically together.

"At ony rate, grannie," resumed her grandson, "I haena dune a' for him 'at I can yet; and I'm no gaein' to believe onything that wad mak me remiss in my endeavour. Houp for mysel', for my father, for a'boddy is what's savin' me, an' garrin' me work. An' gin ye tell me that I'm no workin' wi' God, that God's no the best an' the greatest worker aboon a', ye tak the verra hert oot o' my breist, and I dinna believe in God nae mair, an' my han's drap doon by my sides, an' my legs winna gang. No," said Robert, rising, "God 'll gie me my father sometime, grannie; for what man can do wantin' a father? Human bein' canna win at the hert o' things, canna ken a' the oots an' ins, a' the sides o' love, excep' he has a father amo' the lave to love; an' I hae had nane, grannie. An' that God kens."

She made him no answer. She dared not say that he expected too much from God. Nor is it likely that Jesus will say so of any man or woman when he looks for faith in the earth. Robert went out to see some of his old friends, and when he returned it was time for supper and *worship*. These were the same as of old: a plate of porridge, and a wooden bowl of milk for the former; a chapter and a hymn, both read, and a prayer from grannie, and then a prayer from Robert for the latter. And so they went to bed.

But Robert could not sleep. He rose and dressed himself, went up to the empty garret, looked at the stars through the skylight, knelt and prayed for his father and for all men to the Father of all, then softly descended the stairs, and went out into the street.

It was a warm still night in July—moonless but not dark. There is no night there in the summer—only a long ethereal twilight. He walked through the sleeping town so full of memories—that of Mary St. John, that of Dooble Sanny—they were numberless, and all quiet in his mind now—quiet as the dream that brooded over every house where an old friend had dwelt. He left the town behind, and walked—through the odours of grass and clover, and the yellow flowers that grow on the old earthwalls called *dykes*, those sweet scents to which the darkness is friendly and which, mingling with the smell of the earth itself, reach the tearful founts of memory sooner than even words or tones—down to the brink of the river that flowed scarcely murmuring through the night, itself dark and brown as the night, from its far-off birthplace in the peaty hills. He crossed the foot-bridge and turned into the bleachfield. Its houses were now deserted, for the trade had died out. The machinery stood rotting and rusting away. The wheel gave no answering motion to the flow of the water that glided away beneath it. The thundering *beetles* were still. The huge legs of the wrauk-mill took no more seven-leagued strides nowhither. The rubbing-boards with their thickly-fluted surfaces no longer frothed the soap from every side, tormenting the web of linen into a brightness to gladden the heart of the housewife whose hands had spun the yarn. The terrible boiler that used to send up

from its depths such peaks and ridges of bubbling liquid, as if a volcano had been under it, lay empty and cold. The little house, which the pungent chlorine used to fill with its fumes, stood open to the wind and the rain; he could see the slow river through its unglazed window beyond. The water still went slipping and sliding through the desolate places, a power whose use had departed. The canal, the delight of his childhood, was nearly choked with weeds; it went flowing over long grasses that drooped into it from the edges, giving a faint gurgle once and again in its flow, as if it feared to speak in the presence of the stars, and escaped silently into the river far below. The grass was no longer mown like a lawn, but was long and deep and thick. He climbed to the place where he had once lain and listened to the sounds of the belt of fir-trees behind him, hearing the voice of Nature that whispered *God* in his ears, and there he threw himself down once more. All the old things, the old ways, the old glories of childhood—were they gone? No. Over the whole of them, in them, as they had been in time, as they now were in his love and memory, a part of himself—throughout them all, the power of their being—*God* still was. There is no past with him. An eternal present, Robert felt that he filled his soul and all that his soul had ever filled. His history was taken up into *God*: it had not vanished: his life was hid with *Christ* in *God*. To that *God*, that spring of the human life, nothing that had ever been a joy, a grief, a passing interest to child that he made, could ever cease to be what it had been; for there is no fading at the breath of time, no passing away of fashion, no dimming of old memories in the heart of him whose being creates time and all its concerns. Falconer's heart rose up to him as to his own deeper life, his indwelling deepest spirit—above and beyond him as the heavens are above and beyond the earth, and yet nearer and homelier with him than his own most familiar thought. "As the light fills the earth," thought he, "so *God* fills what we call life. My sorrows, O *God*, my hopes, my joys, the upliftings of my life are with thee, my root, my life. Thy comfortings, my perfect *God*, are strength indeed!"

He rose and looked around him. While he lay, the moon, weak and bleared and dull, had risen—waning and fading. She brightened and brightened till she lighted up the night with a wan, forgetful gleam. "So should I feel," said he, "about the past on which I am now gazing, were it not that I believe in the *God* who forgets nothing. That which has been, is." His eye fell on something bright in the field beyond. He crossed the earthen dyke to see what it was. It shone like a little moon in the grass. He reached it. It was only a cutting of tinned iron, called here white iron, left on the roadside by a tinker and carried hither by some child. He walked on over the field, thinking of Shargar's mother. If he could but find her! He walked on and on. He had no inclination to go home. A youth has such a feeling of the solitariness of the night, the *uncanniness* of the moon, that he does not care to wander far; but Robert had learned long ago to love the night, and to feel at home with *God* in every aspect of his world. How this peacefulness contrasted with the nights in which he was so often out—this green grass under his feet with the dark flow of the Thames—these hills and those clouds half melted into moonlight with the



lanes blazing with gas and crowded with ill-governed, ill-fed, and ill-behaved human beings. He thought of the child of one of these lanes, who, when taken to the country for the first time, sent home one message: "Tell mother that it's dark in the country at night." He thought again if he could but find Shargar's mother! Was it not possible, wanderer as she was, that she might be in Rothieden? Far and wide as such people stray, they had a love for old haunts, and if they came into the same neighbourhood would go to the same place again. He turned back. He hardly knew where he was at first, but the lines of the hill-tops against the sky told him enough to direct his steps. He hastened to the town, and went straight to the back wynd where she used to live with Shargar. Could he believe his eyes? Yes—there was a feeble light burning in the shed. It might be some other poverty-stricken bird of the night, however, and not she who seemed to him at the moment as if she held his fate in her hands. There must surely be illness in the hut with a light there at such a time! He did not know what o'clock it was, but the morning had not come. He drew near to the place, and peeped in at the broken window. A heap of something lay in a corner on the floor, watched only by a long-wicked tallow candle which perhaps some compassionate neighbour had left to comfort a sufferer.

As he looked, the something moved, and a voice that made his heart leap called out querulously,—

"Is that you, Shargar, ye shochlin deevil?"

Falconer hesitated no longer, but lifted the latch and entered. He took up the candle, snuffed it as he best could, and approached the woman. As the light fell on her face she sat up, staring wildly about her with eyes that shunned and yet sought the light. Falconer stood silent, observing her.

"Wha are ye that winna lat me dee in peace and quaietness?"

"I'm Robert Falconer."

"Come to speir efter yer ne'er-do-weel o' a father, I reckon," she said.

"Yes," he answered.

"Wha's that ahin' ye?"

"Naebody."

"Dinna lee. Wha's that ahin' the door?"

"Naebody. I never tell lees."

"Whaur's Shargar? What for doesna he come till 's mither?"

"Hynd awa' ower the seas. He's ane o' the Queen's best sodgers and a captain."

"It's a lee. He's an ill-faured scoonrel no to come till 's mither to bid her gude-bye, and her gaein' to hell."

"Gin ye speir at Christ, he'll tak ye oot o' the mou' o' hell, wuman."

"Christ! wha's that? Ow, ay! It's him 'at they preach aboot i' the kirks. Na, na. There's nae gude o' that. There's nae time to repent noo. I doobt sic repentance as mine wadna gang for muckle wi' the likes o' him."

"It was to save the likes o' you an' me that he cam."

"The likes o' you an' me, said ye, laddie? There's no like atween you and me. He'll hae naething to say to me, but gang to hell wi' ye for a bitch."

"He'll save ye whan ye wadna think it," answered Falconer, taking no notice of her terrible words.

"An' I hae left my bonnie bairn in Lonnon!—gae her to the deevil wi' my ain han's, an' she'll come to hell efter me to girn at me, an' set them on me wi' their reid het taings, and curse me. Och hone! och hone!"

"Hearken to me," said Falconer, with as much authority as he could assume. But she rolled herself over again on the bundle of rags on which she lay, and groaned.

"Tell me whaur she is," said Falconer, "and I'll tak' her oot o' their grup, whae'er they are."

She sat up again, and stared at him for a few moments without speaking.

"I left her wi' a wuman waur nor mysel'," she said at length. "God forgie me."

"He will forgie ye, gin ye tell me whaur she is."

"Do ye think he will? Eh, Maister Faulkner! The wuman bides in a coort aff o' Clare Market. I dinna min' upo' the name o' 't, though I cud gang till 't wi' my een steekit. Her name's Widow Walker—an auld rowdie—damn her sow!"

"Na, na, ye maunna say that gin ye want to be forgien yersel'. I'll do what I can to fin' her oot. An' I'm thinkin' it winna be lang or I hae a grup o' her. I'm gaein' back to Lonnon in twa days or three."

"Dinna gang till I'm deid. Bide an' haud the deevil aff o' me. He has a grup o' my hert noo, rivin' at it wi' his nails—like birds' nebs."

"Ay will I. Gin ye be deen', as ye say, I'll bide wi' ye. But we'll see what can be dune to mak ye better first. What's the maitter wi' ye? I'm a doctor noo."

There was not a chair or box or stool on which he could sit down. He knelt beside her, questioned her pulse, and learned from her answers to his inquiries, that she had been long suffering from a dreadful internal complaint, which had within the last week grown rapidly worse, and from which there was no hope of her recovery. In the name of the God who made her a living soul capable of justice and love, he gave himself to the services of this his wretched sister. Though the night was more than warm, she had fits of shivering. He took his coat off and put it over her, and waited beside her, till the morning, which soon came, relieved her from the awfulness of the dark. He wiped from the poor degraded face the damps of suffering, and the woman-heart was alive still, for she took the hand that ministered to her and kissed it with a moan. When the light came, she fell asleep. Then, as death was not immediately at the door, he left her to go to his grandmother's and see what could be done. There was no good in moving her, for it would only cause her much suffering, and he judged she would feel more at home where she was. Entering as quietly as he could, he waked Betty and told her to get him some peat and coals together. Then peeping into his grandmother's room and finding she was awake, he told her all, and left her to give Betty instructions. He took the coals and the peat, carried them to the hut, and managed, with some difficulty, to get a fire to burn on the hearth. Then he sat on the doorstep till Betty appeared

with two men carrying a mattress and some bedding. The noise they made awoke her.

"Dinna tak' me," she cried. "I winna do't again, an' I'm deein', I tell ye, I'm deein', and that'll clear a' scores—o' this side ony gait," she added, correcting herself.

They lifted her upon the mattress, and made her more comfortable than perhaps she had ever been in her life. But it was only her illness that rendered her capable of prizing such comfort. In health, the heather upon a hill-side was far more to her taste than bed and blankets. She had a wild, roving, savage nature, and the wind was dearer to her than house walls. She had come of ancestors—for we all have our ancestry—and it has far more to do with what we are than perhaps some of us may be willing to acknowledge: Dr. Anderson confessed what his ancestry had been to him; and Robert believed that it was a poor little atom of truth that a soul bred like this woman could ever have been capable of entertaining at best. But she too was eternal—and surely not to be fixed for ever in a bewilderment of sin and ignorance—a wild-eyed soul staring about in hell-fire for want of something it could not understand and had never beheld—by the changeless mandate of the God of love! She seemed to feel some relief in the warmth which was given her, and lay gazing at the fire with eyes that indicated her thoughts, if the reveries that passed through such a brain as hers could, with any true use of words, be called *thoughts*. Things awful to another would no doubt cross her memory without any accompanying sense of dismay; tender things would return without moving her heart; but the kindness of Falconer had a hold of her now. He knew too well that nothing could be done for her body except to render the passage of its soul as easy as might be; but judging from the mood in which she was, that something might be done for the revival of her deeper nature, he gave himself to wait upon her for the few days that she had to live. He sought with all his heart to meet such advances as she made, to answer such questions as she put, which were not many, and revealed the greatest ignorance of the best-known facts of Christianity. But he made no attempt to produce this or that condition of mind in the poor creature. He never made such attempts. "How can I tell with my ignorance what is the next lesson this or that one is capable of learning?" he would say. "That is the work of the Spirit of God. What I have to do is to tell the good news. Let that work as it ought, as it can, as it will." Therefore, in the brief lulls of her pain, he told her about the man Christ Jesus, dwelling especially upon what he did for the poor creatures who came to him—how he spoke so kindly to them and cured them; for he knew that pain is with some the only harbinger that can prepare the way for the entrance of kindness: it is not understood till then. He told her, too, how gentle he was with the sinning women, how he forgave them and told them to do so no more. And he left the story without comment to work that faith which alone can redeem from selfishness and bring into contact with all that is living and productive of life. To believe in Him is to lay hold of eternal life, for he is the Life—therefore the life of men. He received but little encouragement from her; but he did not need that; for he believed

in the Life. Almost the only effect he could distinguish was that her outcries in her pain ceased to be accompanied by that fierce and sometimes dreadful language in which she sought relief at first. "But," he said to himself, "what matter if I see no sign? I am doing my part. And who can tell, when the soul is free from the distress of the body, when the sights and sounds of what we call life have vanished from her, and she is silent in the eternal, with the terrible past behind her, and therefore clear to her consciousness as it has never been before, how the words that I have spoken to her will yet live and grow in her poor ignorant being; how even the kindness God has made me able to show her may remain with her, and help to enable her to believe in the root of all kindness, in the everlasting love of her Father in heaven? The very fact that she can feel it at all is as sure a sign of life as the adoration of an ecstatic saint."

He had no difficulty now in getting from her what information she could give him about his father. It seemed to him, in the absence of all other clue to his discovery, as of the greatest import. It amounted to this, that when he was in London, he used to lodge at the house of an old Scotchwoman of the name of Macallister, who lived in Paradise Gardens, somewhere between Bethnal Green and Spitalfields. Whether he had been in London lately, she did not know; but if anybody could tell him where he was, it would be Mrs. Macallister.

His heart filled with gratitude and hope and the surging desire for the renewal of his London labours. But he could not leave the dying woman till she had gone beyond the reach of what comfort his presence could afford; for this was his work now. One of his favourite references in the Bible was: "He that believeth shall not make haste." Steady labour without haste, readiness without hurry or discomposure, no perturbation, and no hesitation, he considered the divine law of activity. Shargar's mother breathed her last earthly breath holding his hand. There was no one near but himself.

When she was gone, he kneeled by her bed, and prayed to God, saying—

"Father, this woman is in thy hands. Take thou care of her, as thou hast taken care of her hitherto. Let the light go up in her soul, that she may love and trust thee, O light, O gladness of our souls. I thank thee that thou hast blessed me with this ministration. Now lead me to my father. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Then he rose and went to his grandmother and told her all. She put her arms round his neck, kissed him, and said,

"God bless ye, my bonny lad. And he will bless ye. He will; he will. Noo gang yer wa's, and do the wark he gies ye to do. Only min', it's no you, it's Him."

The next morning, the sweet winds of his childhood wooing him to remain yet a day among their fields, he sat on the top of the Aberdeen coach, on his way back to the horrors of court and alley in the terrible London.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SILK-WEAVER.

WHEN he reached London, Falconer made it his first business to find out "Widow Walker." In this he easily succeeded. She was evidently one of the worst of her class; and could it have been accomplished without scandal, and without interfering with the quietness upon which he believed that the true effect of his labours in a great measure depended, he would not have hesitated simply to carry off the child, who went by the name of Nancy Kennedy, to a place of safety. For would the law render him any aid, the girl not having put herself in its power; and his assertion of the right made over to him by the mother could hardly stand against the woman's fact of guardianship. Here he felt, as he had felt before, the pressure of his ignorance of legal affairs, and began in consequence to think whether it would not add to his efficiency in the life which he considered as marked out for him, to go through such a course of study as would fit him for the profession of the law. Gifted with splendid health, and if with a slow strength of grasping, yet with a great power of holding, he set himself to work, and regularly read for the bar. Meantime, he was nearly satisfied, after with some difficulty obtaining a sight of the girl, that it was not yet too late to hope that her feelings were uncorrupted: he knew that a child will sometimes pass almost uninfluenced, in a marvellous manner, through evil that must, a few years later, either disgust or corrupt. That as yet her person remained untarnished, he hoped, that the interests of the wretch in whose keeping she was were sufficient guarantee. But however this might be, he must not allow her to remain there a day longer than he could help.

She was fast growing to a young woman, and he believed looked considerably older than she was. Although she was dark in complexion, black-eyed, and with a face almost flashing with a wild irregular beauty, he fancied he could yet see in her some resemblance to his friend Shargar. Who her father was he had no idea,—probably some finer specimen of the gipsy breed, to which her mother herself did not belong by birth, though her habits and predilections would almost have been proof enough that she had been brought up amongst them.

After some deliberation, he concluded that he must rescue her in the readiest manner through an appeal to the same passion which was now interested in her detention—the cupidity of her evil guardian. This did not seem to be for the good of the woman herself—but he considered that she was too far gone for that to do her harm, while she certainly would be making the money in a more innocent way than if she were to carry out her evil intents. Possibly the best thing for her he might think would be to be hanged, but he could not effect such a beneficence. Some people must receive what is bad for them when they will have it, that their punishment may come the sooner. Seeing the determination of Falconer to have the girl, and utterly careless of his motives, concerning which he did not attempt to persuade her, she insisted on having a hundred and fifty pounds before she would part with her. Falconer paid her the money, and within six months she had



drunk herself to death—perhaps the best thing she was capable of doing on this side of hell-fire. Taking the greatest precautions to prevent any in the neighbourhood from knowing whither he was removing her, and indeed to prevent the girl from remembering in what direction the fearful pit from which he was rescuing her lay, he drove her home to his own dwelling in a close carriage, and gave her in charge to his housekeeper, till he should have time to determine what further measures to take, for her deliverance was far from being effected yet. Not seeing any better way, however, she remained under his housekeeper's care for some time. Nor, although the girl cried a good deal at first, and wanted very much to go back to Mother Walker, as she called her, had he any great trouble with her after a time. But he was not in the least satisfied with her position, or with the kind of education the well-meaning old woman could give her. He tried to teach her a little himself at odd times, but he saw that this would not do for long. After a while she began to take a share in the house-work, and then her chief pleasure was to wait upon him; for as she grew older, she began to see and understand something of the fall from which he had rescued her. Now Falconer's experience of gratitude had already taught him that even that lovely virtue is not without its own attendant dangers. But as he could blame himself for nothing, he would not allow himself to be uneasy about consequences, which would have been altogether against his creed. He began to see, however, that except he cultivated relations with other classes of society as well as with the poor, his means of aiding them would often be found defective. For whatever good he lent himself to do must be done entirely by the influence of the individual: he had little faith in societies, regarding them chiefly as a wretched substitute, just better than nothing, for that help which the neighbour is to give to his neighbour; believing in them just so far as the administration of their means was supplemented by true neighbourhood in those who administered them. Knowing well how the unbelief of many of the most noble-minded of the poor is occasioned by the hopeless darkness and privation of their poverty, in connection often with the sufferings of those who are dear to them, he was confident that only the personal communion of friendship, in the hand and the face of their loving fellow, could make it possible for them to believe in the God of hope. The work of the Christian he regarded as simply this—to be in the world as He was in the world; and believed that in proportion as the truth that dwelt in Him dwelt in his disciples, and from them radiated in like manner as it radiated from Him, the world would be enabled through them to believe in Him. Without this, what was church, or bishops, or clergy? If the bishop would live amongst his poor, the rich would believe the gospel much sooner; whereas he was generally chosen in virtue of qualifications which went far to unfit him for such a life. Money given he regarded as almost worse than useless, save as the sign of deeper love, and accompanied with a gracious presence of human feelings and brotherly love. He always insisted that the Saviour only healed those on whom his humanity had laid hold; that he demanded faith of them to make them regard him, in order that so his personal being might enter into their hearts and thence into their whole natures. Healing without faith in its source would

have done them harm instead of good—would have been to them a windfall, not a Godsend; at best the gift of magic, even sometimes the power of Satan casting out Satan. Therefore Falconer must find those who would personally aid him in his work when his own means—not of money, as yet—would not reach far enough. He must do something in the way of “going into society.”

But before he had even settled how this was to be effected, he was delivered from his perplexity about Nancy in a wonderful way.

One afternoon he was *prowl*ing about Spitalfields, where he had made many acquaintances amongst the silk-weavers and their families. Hearing a loud voice as he passed down a stair from a visit he had been paying further up the house, he went into the room whence it came, for he knew a little of the man who lived and worked there. He was one De Fleuri, or as the neighbours called him, Diffleery, in whose countenance, after generations overwhelmed in want, and such debasement as that had been able to produce, the delicate lines and noble cast of his ancient race was yet emergent. This man had lost his wife and three children, his whole family except a daughter now sick, by what he knew to be simply a slow-consuming hunger; and he did not believe there was a God that ruled in the earth. But he supported his unbelief by no other arguments than a hopelessly bitter glance on his bare walls and his empty loom. Gladly would he have believed with a faith reconciling the life and death of his loved ones with the goodness of a Being who ruled over all; but such a faith had not found him. And now he sat silent—a rock against which the noisy waves of the argumentation of a little combative Bible-reader were breaking in angry and irritating foam. His silence and apparent impassiveness angered the irreverent little worthy still more. To Falconer's humour he looked like a vulgar little bull-terrier barking and growling at a noble, sad-faced staghound. His foolish arguments against infidelity, drawn from Paley's *Natural Theology*, and Tract Society publications about revelation and the inspiration of the Bible, no more touched the sore-hearted unbelief of the man, or had any relation with its cause, than the clangour of negro kettles affects the eclipse of the sun, against which the savages consider it potent. Falconer stood by for a few minutes, watching his opportunity. Nor was the eager disputant long in affording him one. After Socratic fashion, Falconer asked him a question, was answered; followed it with another, which, after a little hesitation, was likewise answered; then asked a third, the ready answer to which involved such a flagrant contradiction of what he had said before, that the poor sorrowful weaver burst into a loud laugh of delight at the discomfiture of his tormentor. Indeed so evident was it to the man himself, that after some stammering and a confused attempt to take up the line of argument from a point further back, he broke out with—“The fool hath said in his heart there is no God,” and with this triumphant discharge of his field-piece, turned and ran down the stairs precipitately.

Both laughed while the sound of his footsteps lasted; but when they ceased Falconer turned and said with a smile—

“Mr. De Fleuri, I believe in God with all my heart, and soul, and strength, and mind; though not in that poor creature's arguments. I don't know that your unbelief is not better than his faith yet.”

"I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Falconer. I haven't laughed for years, I almost think. What right has he to come pestering me in that way?"

"None whatever. And no gentleman would do so. But you must forgive him, both because he is in a measure well-meaning, and because his conceit has very nearly made a fool of him. All his class are not like him by any means. But how is your daughter?"

"Very poorly, sir. She's going after the rest. Why should a Spitalfields weaver be made with a heart? He ought to be like the cats, that don't mind how many of their kittens are drowned."

"Even they don't like it. Only they forget sooner than we do."

"Why do you say *we*, sir? *You* don't know what it is to suffer."

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness, De Fleuri—and finds it enough, I dare say."

The weaver was silent for a moment.

"Will you go and see my poor Katey, sir?"

"Would she like to see me?"

"She says it does her good to see you. I never let that fellow go near her. He may worry me as he pleases; but she shall die in peace. That is all I can do for her."

"But before I go, I want to say something. Do you still persist in refusing help for your daughter as well as for yourself?"

This man had refused Falconer's aid. Not believing in God, he would not be obliged to his fellow. Falconer had never met with a similar instance. He believed it would be much gained to get this man to accept assistance.

"I do. I won't kill her, and I won't kill myself: I am not bound to eat of other men's labour. It will soon be over. It's all right. I only want to leave the whole affair behind; and I sincerely hope there's nothing to come after it. If I were God, I should be ashamed of such a mess of a world. That I would, I know."

"Well, I do believe you would do something more to your own mind, and better, too, as far as you see. But I didn't send that bore away in order to bore you myself."

"There's no fear of you doing that, sir. You talk as if you meant it; not as if you'd got it to do."

"Anyhow, I'm going to see Katey first. Then, if you ask me, I'll tell you something."

"Very well, sir. I won't go up with you, for I won't interfere with what you think proper to say to my Katey."

"That's rather like faith somewhere," thought Falconer. "Could that man fail to believe in Jesus Christ if he only saw him anything like as he is?" But he said nothing more.

Katey lay in a room overhead; for, though he lacked food, this man contrived to pay for a separate room for his daughter, whom he treated with far more respect than many gentlemen treat their wives. Falconer found her lying on a wretched bed. Still it was a bed; and many in the same house had no bed to lie on. Overhead there was a widow with four children, who lay on a floor whence issued at night, by many holes, awful rats, to the horror

of the children, so that often they could not sleep. They did not mind the little ones, they said, but when the big ones came, they were awake all night.

"Well, Katey, how are you to-night?"

"No better, thank God."

She spoke as her father had taught her. Her face was worn and thin, but hardly death-like, save in the hopelessness that veiled it. Yet even here extremes appeared to meet—the very hopelessness to have turned through quietude into comfort. He sat down at the foot of the bed. The hopelessness of the girl affected him more than that of the father.

"I almost wish I were a woman," he said, "that I might wait upon you."

"It wouldn't make any difference, sir. It will soon be over."

But she did not know what difference Falconer meant that it would make.

That moment there came a tap at the door.

"Come in," said Falconer, involuntarily.

A lady in the dress of a Sister of Mercy entered with a little basket on her arm. She started, and hesitated for a moment when she saw Falconer. He rose, thinking it better to go. The lady advanced to the bedside. When he reached the door he turned to tell Katey that he was going to spend an hour with her father. He saw the lady kiss her on the forehead. When he spoke she started again, then left the bedside and came towards him. Her face was now turned to the window, but whether he knew her by her face or her voice first, he could not tell.

"Robert," she said, holding out her hand.

It was Mary St. John. Their hands met, joined fast, and lingered, as they gazed each in the other's face. It was nearly fourteen years since they had parted. Mary St. John was about forty now. The freshness of youth was gone, and the signs of middle age were present on her forehead. But she was statelier, nobler, and gentler than ever. Falconer looked at her calmly, with only a still swelling at the heart, as he might have met her on the threshold of the gate of heaven. He knew at once that all the selfishness of youthful passion was gone, and the old earlier adoration, elevated and glorified, had returned. He felt as if again he were a boy in the presence of a woman-angel. She did not shrink from his gaze, she did not seek to withdraw her hand from his clasp.

"I am so glad, Robert!" was all she said. "We may meet sometimes this way."

"Very likely," he answered, quietly. "This is my work, and by your dress, I see that it is yours."

"Yes," she answered. "I have found my work. Perhaps we can help each other."

"You can help me," returned Falconer. "Had I known where to find you I would have applied to you long ago. I have a girl I don't know what to do with."

"Send her to me."

"I will bring her. But I must tell you about her first, and we cannot well talk here."

"There is my address," she said, giving him a card. "Good-bye."

"Till to-morrow," said Falconer, and returned to the room below.

He found that Miss St. John was well known in the neighbourhood.

"She's not like that Bible fellow," said De Fleuri; "she shows as much respect to the poor as to the rich. She doesn't walk into your house as if it was her own and not yours."

As he said this, the pale-faced weaver was leaning against his idle loom, which was like a dead thing, with the mournfulness of death that belonged to it filling the room. Falconer took a broken chair, the only one, and sat down near him.

"Will you let me take a liberty with you, Mr. De Fleuri?" he said.

"You may say anything you like, Mr. Falconer. You will speak like a gentleman."

"I want to tell you the only fault I have to you."

"Tell me, sir."

"It is that you don't do anything for the other poor people in the house. Whether you believe in God or not, you ought to do what you can for your neighbour."

He said this in the firm belief that to help our neighbour is one of the strongest antidotes to unbelief, as well as an open door out of the stifling air of one's own troubles.

De Fleuri laughed bitterly, and rubbed his hand up and down the smooth outside of his empty pocket. It was a pitiable action.

"What would you have me to do without a sixpence to buy food for my Katey?"

"Sympathy is more precious than even food. You could inquire after them and talk to them a little."

"I fear I have no sympathy to spare, sir."

"I think you would find you had, if you would let it out."

"I should only make them more miserable, for I have no hope to give them. If I believed in anything like a God now, there might be some use in talking to them."

"But there's that poor widow with her four children in the garret. You know how the little dears are tormented by the rats: couldn't you nail bits of wood over their holes?"

De Fleuri laughed again.

"And where am I to get the wood, sir, except I pull down some of those bare laths?" he said. "I don't know any joiner that would give it. And I wouldn't choose to ask for it."

"I shouldn't mind asking," said Falconer.

"That's because you don't know the bitterness of needing."

"But fortunately there's, no occasion for asking in the present case. Although you won't accept anything for yourself, that's no reason why you shouldn't for another. Of course I can give what the poor woman wants. I could send in a man to do it; but I think it would be so much better for her if you would do it. It would do her heart good. And that's what most wants doing good to—isn't it, now?"



"I believe you're right, sir. If it weren't for the misery of it, I shouldn't mind the hunger."

"Come now, De Fleuri—I want to tell you something about myself, and how I came to go about poking my nose into other people's affairs. Would you like to hear some of my history now?"

"Indeed I should, if you didn't mind telling me."

So Falconer began to tell him how he had been brought up, describing the country and their ways of life, and so on, not excluding his adventures with Shargar, until he saw that the man was thoroughly interested. Then he said all at once, pulling out his watch—

"But it's time I had my tea, and I haven't half done yet. I am not fond of being hungry, like you, De Fleuri."

The poor fellow could only manage a very dubious smile.

"I'll tell you what," said Falconer, as if the thought had only just struck him—"come home with me, and I'll tell you the rest of it at my own place."

"You must excuse me, sir. I told you I had made up my mind. If I'm not worth keeping alive by honest work, why I'll die."

"Bless my soul, the man's as proud as Lucifer! Who talked about keeping you alive? A fellow won't accept a neighbour's invitation to a cup of tea because he won't be kept alive!"

"It's very kind of you, sir, to put it in that way; but I don't choose to be taken in. You know very well it's not as one equal asks another you ask me. It's charity."

"Well, do I treat you in any other way than as an equal?"

"But you know we're not for all that."

"But isn't there something better than being equals? Supposing, as you will have it, that we're not equals, can't we be friends?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Do you think now, De Fleuri, that if I thought you weren't something more to me than my equal merely, I would go telling you about my own history in this way. But I forgot: I haven't told you much yet. I have something to tell you that will make you see how much nearer I am to a level with you than you think. And I confess I had the design, when I asked you, of getting you to help me in something I have to do. Come, don't be a fool. I want you."

"I can't leave Katey all alone," said the weaver, hesitatingly.

"Miss St. John is there still. I will ask her to stop till you come back."

Without waiting for an answer, he ran up the stairs, and had speedily arranged with Miss St. John. Then taking his consent for granted, he hurried De Fleuri away with him, and knowing how unfit men of his trade are for walking, irrespective of feebleness from want, he called the first cab, and took him home to his lodging in John Street. Here, over their tea, which, although he had not dined yet, he judged the safest meal for the unaccustomed stomach of De Fleuri, he told him about his father and his grandmother, and Dr. Anderson, and how he came by the leading of all things to give himself to the work he was at, partly for its own sake, partly

in the hope of finding his father. He told him what was his only clue to finding him; and that he had called on Mrs. Macallister twice every week since his return to London two years ago, but that he had heard nothing of him. De Fleuri showed the greatest interest in the story. And one of the ends which Falconer had in view in relating it was gained: the weaver was much more at home with him after hearing it. Such a close relation to an outcast of society, not to mention the sympathy awakened by his trouble, did bring Falconer in the eyes of De Fleuri nearer to his own level.

"Do you want all about your father kept a secret, sir?" he asked.

"I don't want it made a matter of common gossip. But I do not mind how many respectable people like yourself know of it, who will be discreet."

He said this with a hope that thence some help might come to him in the prosecution of his search.

Before they parted, the unaccustomed tears had visited the eyes of De Fleuri, and he had consented not only to take money for the repair of Mrs. Chisholm's garret-floor, but to take in hand the expenditure of a certain sum weekly, as he should judge expedient, upon the people who lived in that and the neighbouring houses—in no case, however, except of sickness, or actual want of bread from want of work. Thus did Falconer appoint a sorrow-made infidel to be the almoner of his Christian charity, knowing well that the nature which was in the Son of Man was in him too, and that to enable him to do as the Son of Man did, in ever so small a degree, was the readiest means of bringing his higher nature to birth. Nor did he ever repent of the choice he had made. But it was some time yet before De Fleuri would accept any hire for labour in that way. As, however, Miss St. John was already ministering to his daughter's wants, and he had not the heart to indulge his pride at her expense, nor she the obstinacy of her father to resist such tenderness as hers, his refusal was of less consequence than it had been. Katey soon began to recover.

When Falconer waited upon Miss St. John the next day, he found her in the ordinary dress of a lady. She received him with perfect confidence and kindness, but no reference to the past was made by either of them. She told him that she had belonged to a sisterhood, but had left it only a few days before, believing she could do better without its restrictions.

"It was an act of cowardice," she said—"I hope of nothing worse—my wearing the dress yesterday. I had got used to it, and did not feel safe to go without it; but I shall not do so again."

"I think you are right," said Falconer. "The nearer any friendly act is associated with the individual heart, without any intervention of class or creed, the more the humanity, which is the divinity of it, appears."

He told her all about Nancy, and asked what she could do with her.

"I will keep her about myself for a while," she answered, "and then I shall be able to see what I can do. I know a good many people who, without being prepared, or perhaps able, to take any trouble, are yet ready to do a kindness when it is put in their way."

"I feel more and more that I ought to go into any society that may be open to me," said Falconer; "for I find my means of helping others greatly

straitened from my acquaintance in London being so limited. What had I best do? I suppose I must get some introductions."

"That will be easily managed. I will introduce you to one or two people; and if you will only accept the invitations given you, you will soon know a good many—of all sorts," she added, with a smile.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BROTHERS.

ANOTHER reason for cultivating some acquaintance besides that of the poor was soon added. He had kept up a correspondence with Shargar, giving him an outline of what he was about from time to time. One day, as he sat at a late breakfast, which was of frequent occurrence with him, he was so often out the greater part of the night and early morning, Shargar burst into his room. Falconer had not even known that he was coming home, for he had outstripped the letter he had sent. He had his arm in a sling, which accounted for his leave.

"Shargar!" cried Falconer, in delight.

"Major Shargar, if you please. Give me my honours, Robert," said Moray, presenting his left hand.

"I congratulate you, my boy. Well, this is delightful! But you are wounded."

"Bullet—broken—that's all. It's nearly well. I'll tell you about it by and by. My mind or my heart is too full of something else, to talk about trifles of that sort. I want you to help me."

He then proceeded to inform Robert that he had fallen desperately in love with a lady who had come on board with only her maid at Malta, where she had been spending the winter. She was not very young, about his own age, but very beautiful, and of enchanting address. How she could have remained so long unmarried he could not think. It could not be but that she had declined many offers. She was an heiress, too, but that Shargar felt to be a disadvantage, seeing all the progress he could yet boast of was that his attentions had not been, so far as he could judge, disagreeable to her. Robert thought even less of the latter fact than Shargar himself, for there were very few women to whom he could believe that his attentions would be disagreeable, for they would always be simple and manly. What was more to the point, she had given him her address in London, and he was going to call upon her the next day. She was on a visit to Lady Janet Gordon, an elderly spinster, who lived in Park-street.

"Are you quite sure she's not an adventuress, Shargar?"

"It is of no mainer o' use to tell-ye what I'm sure or no sure o', Robert, in sic a case. But I'll manage, somehow, 'at ye sall see her yersel', an' syne I'll speir back yer ain question at ye."

"Weel, hae ye tauld her a' aboot yersel'?"

"Oh, Lord, no!" answered Shargar, growing suddenly pale. "I never thocht aboot that. But I had nae richt, for a' that passed, to intrude mysel' upo' her to that extent."

"Weel, I reckon ye're richt. Yer wounds an' medals oucht to weigh weel against a' that. There's this comfort in 't, that gin she bena richt weel worthy o' ye, auld frien', she winna tak' ye."

Shargar was considerably depressed for the remainder of the day. In the morning, however, he seemed in wild spirits. Just before he started on his visit, however, he said to Robert, with an expression of tremulous anxiety—

"Oucht I to tell her a' at ance—already—aboot—aboot my mither?"

"I dinna say that. Maybe it wad be equally fair to her and to yersel' to lat her ken ye a bit better afore ye do that.—We'll think that ower.—When ye gang doon the stair, ye'll see a bit brougham at the door waitin' for ye. Gie the coachman ony orders 'at ye like. He's your servant as lang's ye think fit to bide in London. Commit yer way to the Lord, my boy."

Though Shargar did not say much, he felt strengthened by Robert's truth to meet his fate with something of composure. But it was not to be decided that day. Therein lay some comfort.

He returned in high spirits. He had been graciously received both by Miss Hamilton and Lady Janet—a kind-hearted old woman who spoke Scotch with the pure tone of a gentlewoman, he said—a treat not to be had once in a twelvemonth in Scotland itself even then, and now scarcely to be had at all. She had asked him to come to dinner in the evening, and to bring his friend with him. Robert, however, begged him to make his excuse, as he had an engagement in a very different sort of place that evening.

When Shargar returned in great satisfaction, Robert had not come in. He was too excited to go to bed, and sat up for his friend. It was two o'clock before he came home. Shargar told him that there was to be a large party at Lady Patterdale's the next evening but one, and Lady Janet had promised to procure him an invitation if she could.

The next morning Robert went to see Mary St. John, and asked if she knew anything of Lady Patterdale, and whether she could get him an invitation. Miss St. John did not know her, but she thought she could manage it for him through a friend. He told her all about Shargar, and that he wished to see Miss Hamilton before he consented to be introduced to her. Miss St. John set out at once, and a card arrived at his dwelling the next day.

Robert had actually gone to a Bond-street tailor and ordered a suit of clothes on the chance of the invitation, for he had not such an article as a tail-coat in his possession. He allowed Shargar to set out alone in his brougham, and followed an hour later in a hansom.

When he reached the house the rooms were tolerably filled, and as several had arrived just before him, he managed to enter the drawing-rooms without being announced. There he began to look around him. Not a few stared a little at the tall, distinguished-looking stranger, who seemed to know no one; but Falconer, although unused to such assemblies, was far too familiar with humanity itself not to be quite at his ease. After a little while he caught sight of Shargar. He stood alone, almost in a corner, with a strange, rather *raised* expression in his eyes. Falconer could not see the object to which they were directed. Certainly, their look was not exactly that of love.

He made his way up to and laid his hand on his arm. Shargar betrayed no little astonishment when he saw him.

"You here, Robert!" he said.

"Yes, I'm here. Have you seen her yet? Is she here?"

Without answering his questions, Shargar said in a low voice, suppressed yet more to hide his excitement,

"Wha do ye think 's speakin' till her this verra minute? Look there!"

Following his directions, Robert saw, amidst a little group of gentlemen surrounding a seated lady, of whose face he could not get a peep, a handsome elderly man, who looked more fashionable than his years justified, and had what he felt to be a repulsive expression. He thought he had seen him before, but Shargar gave him no time to come to any conclusion himself.

"It's my brither Sandy, as sure's deith!" he said; "and he's been hingin' about her ever sin' she cam' in. But I dinna think she likes him a'thegither by the leuk o' her."

"What for dinna ye gang up till her yersel', man? I would hae nae notion o' that kind o' thing gin I war in your shune."

"I'm feared 'at he ken me. He's terrible gleg. A' the Morays are gleg, and yon marquis has an ee like a hawk."

"What does that matter? Ye hae dune naething to be ashamed o' like him."

"Ay; but it's this. I wadna hae her hear the trowth aboot me frae that boar's mou' o' his first. I wad hae her hear 't frae my ain, an' syne she canna think I meant to tak' her in."

At this moment there was a movement which caused the group to disperse a little. Shargar hearing no reply from his friend, looked round at him. It was now Shargar's turn to be surprised at the expression of Robert's countenance.

"Are ye seein' a vraith, Robert?" he said. "What's the maitter wi' ye 'at ye leuk like that, man?"

"Oh!" answered Robert, recovering himself, "I thought I saw some one I knew. But I'm not sure. I'll tell you afterwards. We've been talking too seriously. People are beginning to look at us."

So saying, he moved away towards the group of which the marquis still formed one. As he drew near, he saw that the lady was seated with her back towards a piano. A sudden impulse seized him. It was altogether unwarrantable from a social point of view, but he yielded to it. He went gently up to the piano, and seating himself, began to play very softly—so softly that the sounds could scarcely have been heard beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the instrument. There was no change on the storm of talk that filled the room. But in a few minutes a face white as a shroud was turned round upon him from the group in front, like the moon dawning out of a black cloud. He stopped at once, saying to himself, "I was right; it is she," rose and mingled again with the crowd. A few minutes after, he saw Shargar leading her out of the room, and Lady Janet following. He did not intend to wait his return, but got near the door, that he might slip out when Shargar should re-enter. But Shargar did not return. The moment



she reached the fresh air, Miss Hamilton was so much better than Lady Janet, whose heart was as young towards young people as if she never had had the unfortunate love-affair tradition attributed to her history, asked him to see them home, and he followed them into the old-fashioned roomy carriage. Falconer left a few minutes after, anxious for quiet that he might make up his mind as to what he ought to do. Before he had walked home, he had resolved on the next step. But not wishing to see Shargar yet, and at the same time wanting to have a night's rest, he went home only to change his garments, and then betook himself to a hotel in Covent Garden.

Heedless of convention, he was at Lady Janet's door by ten o'clock the next morning, and sent in his card to Miss Hamilton. He was shown into the drawing-room, where after a few minutes she came to him.

"May I presume on old acquaintance?" he said, holding out his hand as he advanced to meet her.

She looked in his face quietly, took his hand, and to his surprise pressed it warmly, saying—

"No one has so good a right, Mr. Falconer. Do sit down."

He placed a chair for her, and then obeyed.

After a moment's silence on both sides:

"Are you aware, Miss ——?" he said, and hesitated.

"Miss Hamilton," she said with a smile. "I was Miss Lindsay when you knew me so many years ago. I will explain presently."

Then with an air of expectation, she awaited the finish of his sentence.

"Are you aware, Miss Hamilton, that I am Major Moray's oldest friend?"

"I am quite aware of it, and delighted to know it. He told me so last night."

Somewhat dismayed at this answer, Falconer resumed:

"Did Major Moray likewise inform you who he himself is?"

"He did. He told me all."

Falconer was silent again for some moments.

"Shall I be presuming too far upon your frankness if I venture to conclude that my friend will not continue his visits?"

"On the contrary," she answered, with the same delicate blush that in old times used to overpread the lovely whiteness of her face, "I expect him within half an hour."

"Then there is no time to be lost," thought Falconer.

"Without presuming to express any opinion of my own," he said, coldly, "a social code far less severe than that which prevails in England, would take for granted that an impassable barrier existed between Major Moray and Miss Hamilton."

"Do not think, Mr. Falconer, that I was incapable of meeting Major Moray's honesty with equal openness on my side."

Falconer, for the first time almost in his life, was incapable of speech from bewilderment. But Miss Hamilton did not in the least enjoy his perplexity, and made haste to rescue both him and herself. With a blush that was now deep as that of any rose, she resumed:

"But I owe you equal frankness, Mr. Falconer. There is no barrier between Major Moray and myself but the foolish—no, wicked—indiscretion of an otherwise innocent and ignorant girl. Listen, Mr. Falconer. Under the necessity of the circumstances you will not misjudge me that I compel myself to speak to you calmly about the matter. This, I trust, will be my final penance. I thought Lord Rothie was going to marry me. To do him justice, he never said so. Make what excuse for my folly you can. I was lost in a mist of vain imaginations. I had had no mother to teach me anything, Mr. Falconer, and you know my father never suspected that it was necessary to teach me anything. I was very ill on the passage to Antwerp, as I daresay you know; and, I cannot tell how, when I began to recover a little, I found my mind beginning to doubt both as to what I was doing, and as to his lordship's intentions towards me. Possibly the fact that he was not quite so attentive during my illness as I had expected, and that I felt a little hurt in consequence, aided the growth of the doubt. Then the thought of my father returning and finding that I had left him came and burned in my heart like fire. But what was I to do? I had never been out of Aberdeen before. I did not know even a word of French. I was quite in Lord Rothie's power. I thought I loved him, but it was not much of love that sea-sickness could so far get the better of as to teach me to distrust him. With a heart full of despair I went on shore with him. The captain put a note in my hand. I put it in my pocket, but pulled it out with my handkerchief in the street. Lord Rothie picked it up. I begged him to give it to me, but he read it, and then tore it in pieces. I went with him to the hotel, as wretched as girl could well be. I began to dislike him. But during dinner he was so kind and attentive that I tried to persuade myself again that my fears were all fanciful. After dinner he took me out. On the stairs we met a lady whose speech in giving her maid some direction showed that she was Scotch. Her maid called her Lady Janet. She looked kindly at me as I passed. I thought she could read everything in my face. But I remembered afterwards that Lord Rothie turned his head away when we met her. We went into the cathedral, and were standing under that curious dome, where I was looking up at its strange lights, when down came what seemed a rain of bell-notes on the roof over my head. Before the first tune was over I seemed to expect the second, and then the third, hardly thinking how it could be that I knew what was coming; but when it ended with that wonderful ballad about the Witch Lady, and I lifted up my head and saw that I was not by my father's fireside, but in Antwerp Cathedral with Lord Rothie, I was filled with a despair that gave me a half insane resolution, the only kind, I have thought since, that could have been of any use to me. Happily Lord Rothie was at some little distance talking to a priest about one of Rubens's pictures before which they were standing. I slipped unseen behind the nearest pillar, and then, unable to take any more precautions, flew from the church. How I got to the hotel I do not know, but I did reach it alone. 'Lady Janet,' was all I could say to the waiter. He knew the name, and led me to her room. I threw myself on my knees, and begged her to save me. She assured me no one should touch me. I

gasped 'Lord Rothie,' and fainted. When I came to myself—but I need not tell you all the particulars. Lady Janet did take care of me. Till last night I never saw Lord Rothie again. I did not acknowledge any recognition of him, but he persisted in talking to me, and I saw well enough that he knew me."

She now came to a pause. Falconer took her hand and kissed it.

"Thank God," he said. "Those bells were indeed the haunts of angels as I fancied them while I played upon them."

"I knew it was you—I was sure of it when I came to think about it; but at the time I thought it was a direct message from heaven."

"It was such none the less that I was sent to deliver it," said Falconer. "I little thought, during the imprisonment that followed because of it, that my end was already accomplished."

Mysie put her hand in his.

"You have saved me, Mr. Falconer."

"For Ericson's sake, who was dying and could not," returned Falconer.

"Ah!" said Mysie, her large eyes opening with surprise. It was evident she had had no notion of his attachment to her.

"But," said Falconer, "there was another in it, without whom I could have done nothing."

"Who was that?"

"George Moray."

"Did he know me then?"

"No. Fortunately not. You would not have looked at him then. It was all done for love of me. He is the truest fellow in the world, and altogether worthy even of you, Miss Hamilton. I will tell you the whole story some day, lest he should not do himself justice."

"Ah, that reminds me. Hamilton sounds strange in your voice. You suspected me of having changed my name to hide my history."

It was so, and Falconer's silence acknowledged the fact.

"Lady Janet brought me home, and told my father all. When he died a few years after, she took me to live with her, and never rested till she had brought me acquainted with Sir John Hamilton, in favour of whom my father had renounced his claim to the disputed estates. Sir John had lost his only son, and he had no daughter. He was a kind-hearted old man rather like my own father. He took to me, as they say, and made me change my name to his, leaving me the property that might have been my father's, on condition that whoever I married should take the same name. I don't think your friend will mind making the exchange," said Mysie, in conclusion, as the door opened, and Shargar came in.

"Robert, ye're a' gait!" he said, as he entered. Then, without stopping to ask questions, "Ye see I'm to hae a name o' my ain efter a'," he said, with a face which looked even handsome in the light of its own delight.

Robert shook hands with him, and wished him joy heartily.

"Wha wad hae thought it, Shargar," he added, "that day 'at ye put bonnets for hose upo' Black Geordie's huves?"

The butler announced the Marquis of Boarshead. Mysie's eye flashed.

She rose from her seat instantly, and advanced to meet the marquis, who entered close behind the servant. He bowed and held out his hand. Mysie retreated one step, and stood.

"Your lordship has no right to intrude upon me thus. You must have seen that I had no desire to renew the acquaintance I was unhappy enough to form—now, thank God, many years ago."

"Forgive me, Miss Hamilton. One word in private," said the marquis.

"Not a word," returned Mysie.

"Before these gentlemen, then, whom I have not the honour of knowing, I yet offer you my hand."

"To accept that offer would be to wrong myself even more than your lordship has done. But my hand is not my own to give."

She went back to where Moray was standing, put her hand in his, and stood beside him. The evil spirit in the marquis looked out at its windows.

"You are aware, madam," he said, "that your reputation is in my hands?"

"The worse for it, my lord," returned Mysie, with a scornful smile. "But your lordship's brother will protect it even from your lordship."

"My brother!" said the marquis. "What do you mean? I have no brother."

"Ye hae mair brithers than ye ken o', Lord Sandy, and I'm ane o' them," said Shargar.

"Then you are either a liar or a bastard," said the marquis, who had not been brought up in a school of which either self-restraint or respect for women were prominent characteristics.

Falconer forgot himself for a moment, and made a stride forward.

"Dinna hit him, Robert," cried Shargar. "He ance gae me a shillin', an' it helpit, as ye ken, to haud me alive to face him this day.—No liar, my lord, but a bastard, thank heaven." Then, with a laugh, he instantly added, "Gin I had been ain brither to you, my lord, God only knows what a rascal I micht hae been."

"By God, you shall answer for your damned insolence," said the marquis, and, lifting his riding-whip from the table where he had laid it, he approached his brother.

Mysie rang the bell.

"Haud yer han', Sandy," cried Shargar. "I hae faced and focht wi' mair fearsome foes than you. But I hae some family-feelin', though ye hae nane. I wadna willin'ly strike my brither."

As he spoke, Shargar retreated a little. The marquis came on with raised whip. But Falconer stepped between, laid one of his great hands on the marquis's chest, and flung him to the other end of the room, where he fell over an ottoman. The same moment the servant entered.

"Ask your mistress to oblige me by coming to the drawing-room," said Mysie.

The marquis had risen, but had hardly recovered his presence of mind when Lady Janet entered. She looked inquiringly from one to the other.

"Please, Lady Janet, will you ask the Marquis of Boarshead to leave the house," said Mysie.

"With all my hert," answered Lady Janet; "and the mair readily that he's a kin' o' a cousin o' my ain. Gang yer wa's, Sandy. Ye're no' fit company for dacent fowk; an' that ye wad ken yersel', gin ye had the smallest idea left o' what dacency means."

Without heeding her, the marquis went up to Falconer.

"Your card, sir."

Lady Janet followed him.

"'Deed ye s' get nae cairds here," she said, pushing him aside.

"So you allow your friends to insult me in your house as they please, cousin Janet?" said the marquis, who probably felt her opposition the most formidable of all.

"'Deed they canna say waur o' ye nor I think. Gang awa', an' repent. Tak' tent o' yer gray hairs, man."

This was the severest blow he had yet received. He left the room, swearing "at large."

Falconer followed him; but what came of their interview, nobody ever heard.

Major and Miss Hamilton were married within three months, and went out to India together, taking Nancy Kennedy with them.

---

## AN IRISH DENTIST.

BY EMERALD GREEN.

MISTRESS MOLLY KAVANAGH was the wife of a poor small farmer who resided in one of the northern counties of Ireland. Contrary to the belief of city doctors in general, and of dental surgeons in particular, that the healthy country peasants enjoy complete exemption from that "sorest ill that flesh is heir to," the toothache, Mistress Molly Kavanagh, in common with many in her rank of life, suffered from it exceedingly.

And what nation, people, or community, we would like to know, is wholly exempt from its exasperating inflictions, or carries not within their respective jaws the tiny nerve materials for their own future exquisite self-torture? Dr. Livingstone tells us that the very wild beasts—the lions, tigers, giraffes, &c., of the African jungle and desert suffer even unto death by starvation from toothache,—that they become harmless, miserably downcast, and fearful, and, making a virtue of necessity, cease to devour one another or prey upon mankind, for the same reason, we suppose, that the old *roués* of society give up sinning, namely, because they have no longer the power to be vicious.

Again, there was an Egyptian mummy recently discovered whose teeth were found to be stuffed with gold. What for? For toothache of course. Those golden pellets show us how there were dentists in those days, and how the grand old ladies and gentlemen of those days, when they could



no longer endure, rose up and fled to their teeth doctors, as our ladies and gentlemen still flee when sore distraught; and in their "Infallible Remedies," "Perfect Cures," "Amelioratives," lotions, and potions, they did no doubt put confidence, until they found (as we still find) by personal application that they but mocked the woes and aggravated the sufferings they professed to relieve.

We learn, too, that the same unwillingness to part with all the cause of all their woe prevailed. The same patching, bolstering, and stuffing, which still goes on, was perfected amongst them as an art. And all this, after the repose, perchance, of forty centuries, this old, old dweller of the Nile comes down to show us. And more also, for with the hoary dust of ages upon him he opens his mouth and reveals to us one more striking proof of the verity of king Solomon's world-known aphorism, that there is "nothing new under the sun." No, not even in the refined tortures of that merciless tyrant toothache, nor in the remedies and appliances wherewith man has sought to obviate the evil, or soothe and ameliorate its vexatious inflictions.

And, ye men of probe and forceps, ye manufacturers of cunningly-devised substitutes and false sets, ye busy practitioners amongst patient or impatient customers in great towns and cities, do not persuade yourselves, nor attempt to persuade us, as a rising member of your fraternity once did, that rusticity offers no subjects for your skill and practice!

Long residence in a rural district, and intimate acquaintance with its inhabitants, has convinced us of the fallaciousness of that theory. And do you want proof in point? Come and see poor Molly Kavanagh, or stay and we will tell you all about her, how she suffered, and how she was cured by an amateur member of your profession, an original—a *very* original practitioner, whose mode of operation, however, we would not recommend for general adoption.

At the time of our story Mrs. Kavanagh had been suffering almost incessantly from toothache for three weeks. During that time she had exhausted all the possible and impossible remedies prescribed by "well-meaning but mistaken men." These, however, proving ineffectual, she still sat disconsolately by the fire, rocking herself to and fro, as is the manner of people in her rank of life when visited by sickness or sorrow or distress. In this sorry plight she was found by Phil Reilly, or *Reilly Phil*, as he delighted to call himself in rude poetic effusions in which he always wanted "your loving Phil" to rhyme with "my old goose quill" in the last verse.

Phil Reilly, then, or poetically, and not at all unfrequently, Reilly Phil, is—we may as well tell you at once—an old bachelor, and likely to remain one, despite all his little love notes and poetic amatory epistles. Those wonderful epistles! smelling strongly of tobacco smoke, and written on shabby little bits of paper! The lower orders of the Irish are very economical about the use of letter paper. Very profound and important must be the occasion that warrants such extravagance as the use of a whole sheet. Phil's love notes were written upon half sheets of coarse, blue-ruled paper torn surreptitiously from the copybook of some idle schoolboy, and intended originally by the National Board not for the reception of Phil's flights of genius, but for said idle schoolboy's unformed "Crooks" and "Potsticks."

Very different, however, were the caligraphic characters Phil traced thereon. His "old goose quill" was made to perform wonders quite in keeping with the flowery nature of his subject, and the imposing grandeur of the words in which it was discussed. These words, perhaps, were not always correctly applied, but they were always high sounding and of an imposing character. For this reason no doubt they were invested with mysterious importance in the estimation of those to whom they were addressed, and who were, if possible, just one shade more ignorant of their rightful meaning than Phil himself. Thus, for instance, he invited one girl to be his "gentle coadjutor through life," and another was informed how that he had taken a *synopsis* of her as she left the chapel door and walked down the street in great opulence, and thereupon fell straight in love; whilst to a third he intimated that she had made roast beef of his heart with the fire of her eyes!

From all this you will understand what indeed was very well known in Phil's own immediate neighbourhood, that the magnificent productions of his old goose quill were quite familiar to, and recognisable by, more than one young lady of his acquaintance. Not that by any means we wish to intimate that Phil was a flirt. The man was nothing of the kind, he wanted simply to get married, and holding with Virgil (only Phil did not know who he held it with) that

"They can conquer, who believe they can;"

when he "missed fire" in one direction, he turned his amatory epistolary batteries in another.

On one occasion, indeed, he fired two shots at once, believing, like Lord Dundreary (who must be an Hibernian to have uttered such an Irishism), that "one girl is just as good as another, and often a great deal better." If Phil succeeded in obtaining either he would be content. But both these provoking girls persisted in regarding his poetic addresses rather as amusing proofs of his great skill and cleverness as a poet, than as serious proposals of marriage to their respective selves; moreover, Phil was a rolling stone, and had gathered no moss, nor, indeed, very much of the wherewithal on which moss grows—and that is land. He had no "comfortable sitting down" for a girl. If he had had, perhaps, he would have succeeded better, and found some one of them more willing to "keep his company," and allow him to "put spake" on her. As it was, no prudent girl would think of marrying him. And there are prudent peasant girls who look before they leap into the marriage ring, just as there are prudent young city ladies who do the same. Again, Phil was an "ould boy," as some of them would tell you, and an "ancient boy," as others termed him; and young peasant girls have just the same objection to "ould," alias "ancient boys," that young ball-room belles have to ancient beaux; only they have this immense advantage over the latter, they are not compelled, for mercenary reasons, to marry them, as their splendidly miserable sisters often are.

If, indeed, there is one class of women in the world who marry for pure affection and nothing else, it is the Irish peasant girls. They have no other incentive than affection, for they generally bring to their peasant-husbands mud-wall cabin just what they get, and that is nothing; they endow themselves

with each other and nothing more, often starting in life with as little forethought or preparation for the future as the birds of the air prepare to bring forth their young in pairing time.

Phil, however, having neither youth, nor indeed *beauty*, nor yet money to recommend him, remained unmated; and wandered the world, his little world, in single blessedness, or *unblessedness*—which is it, ye old bachelors? Evidently Phil considered his single state *unblessed*, since he was so industrious in his efforts to alter it; and though often down-hearted he never despaired, nor indeed questioned his just claims to having his persistence at length suitably crowned with success. It takes a great deal to convince some ineligible men of their unsuitability in the matrimonial market, and amongst these inconvincibles our friend Phil might certainly be ranked.

In this sorry plight we find him the master of a small house, and “place,” to be sure, but with no *fireside*; that is, with nothing deserving the name: no jolly turf fire blazing ever so high and shedding its balmy heat all over the kitchen, whilst on the hearth, and “straight forenent him,” *somebody* sits and sings, or “discoorses,” as she knits and patches and darns for him and the children; and sleepy little heads are laid up against his knee, and bright little eyes begin to blink as they watch the pot boiling till the “pratees” be done, and hungry little mouths are open to eat them, and bare little feet then run off with tired happy little bodies to bed.

The Irish peasants have a great deal of sentiment and imagination about them, and Phil is full of it as he sighs “Ah me!” And turning away from his cheerless hearth and the fireplace covered with melancholy soot, he leans over his “half-door,” and looks wearily out on the grey winter world. And then having no fireside, as we have just remarked, he puts on his old frieze top-coat and hat, and betakes himself frequently to the homes of his neighbours. In these, indeed, he is ever welcome, for his pipe and his joke, his ready conversational powers, newsy propensities, and obliging manners have rendered him popular. Moreover, Phil is a man who is much looked up to in these parts as a man “of a great big knowledge, sir,” a man who knows all about herbs and their different powers and qualities in effecting cures amongst diseases in people and cattle. He is also noted for his great skill in healing burns, scalds, sprains, and such like, and, in fact, he is a kind of local reference, an “Inquire within for everything,” whose infallibility nobody questions. His neighbours, indeed, have invested him with quite a mysterious amount of knowledge, “skill” they call it; and many of them put more faith in Reilly Phil, and his simple herbaceous remedies, than they do in all the pills and potions, mercurial preparations and *uncanny* doses of the first learned practitioner in the county. Yes, that they do, notwithstanding all his books, and his learning, and his college-bred ways, and his doctor’s tools, and his new-fangled notions, and his Greek and Latin, and his mattymattocks into the bargain. All of which medical accompaniments and accomplishments the simple rural Irish peasants regard in many districts even yet with less of faith than terror.

On entering the house of Mistress Molly Kavanagh, whither he had gone to make his *Kayleagh*, alias pay an uninvited visit, he was much concerned to find that afflicted matron sitting by the fire in sorry plight, as we have

already described her. "Why, Molly," he exclaimed, as he drew up a stool from the "back wall" and sat down close beside her, "what the mischief is the matter with ye? Is all belonging to ye dead, or is it dyin' yerself ye are?" And Phil looked sympathisingly into the face of Molly, or at all events into that portion of it which was visible, for one half was buried in the ample folds of what Molly was pleased to designate her best white pocket-handkerchief, but judging from its size it was, in our opinion, her best small table-cloth. "I say is it dyin' ye are?" repeated Phil, with a friendly shake, for Molly showed an unusual reticence of speech which rather troubled and alarmed Phil.

"No, thank goodness, Phil dear!" she at length replied, "it's not jist as bad as that wid me, though, dear knows, if this lasts much longer it will be the death o' me, for I'm worried out and out wid the achin', and I'm bothered entirely wid the gnawin', and as for me mouth it's parboiled wid all the burnin' things I have tuck to cure it, and me appetite's gone completely; and as for sleep—och, that I may never live if me two eyes went together these three nights." "Bekase your nose was between them," chimed in Phil, in an undertone which failed to reach the muffled-up ears of Molly. "For the minnit it gets me down," she continued, "it falls to the gnawin' and twitchin' like a born imp as it is; and then up I bounce and there I sit till I get stone could, and then I lies down again, and I'm hardly right warmed on me pillow till it falls to its torments again; and there's the way I'm managed."

And poor Molly spoke with an air of exceeding bitterness and displeasure, as if her toothache was an actual personal foe,—the bad tooth a bad child who had no right to stay there and worry the being who maintained its existence.

"Bad enough," cried the kind-hearted Phil, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and charged it afresh, and prepared to light it at a little coal which he had drawn out with the tongs for that purpose upon the hearth.

"Ay, bad enough you may say!" cried Molly, much comforted by her listener's sympathy. "Look here," she continued, "d'ye know what I'm goin' to tell ye? I just riz up last night entirely, and sat sufferin' here over the coals the live-long night, till the grey dawn broke in the mornin'."

"And thought of purgatory, I'll go bail," put in Phil, who was somewhat of a quizz; "for its purty hot ye must have been in that same attitude."

"Now Phil, ye thief o' the world, is it takin' me off ye are?" shrieked the exasperated goodwife, who began to think Phil was not so sincere in his sympathy after all as she had imagined. "Troth it's ashamed of yerself ye ought to be for comin' here to laugh at a body that's not able to say a word in her own defence."

"I ax yer pardon 'umbly, Molly dear," replied Phil, who had the least little pucker of a smile still lingering about the corners of his mouth; "but toothache, you know, is the quarest disaise in all the world, it makes everybody laugh at them that has it!"

"Well, well, Phil dear," resumed Molly, in a more conciliatory strain, "let them laugh that may, and that's not *me*. But come now, don't they say you're mighty knowledgible entirely at doctorin' the brute bastes and

yer fellow craytures into the bargain? and who knows but you might be able to do somethin' for me, and if ye do—may the blessings of a grateful woman be ever about ye!"

"Oh troth, Molly dear," replied the obliging and complimentary Phil, "and not that I'd say it t'yer face, but there's not another woman in the county I'd sarve quicker than yourself! and it's proud I'd be to relieve ye if I could."

"Och and it's not meself that would be after doubtin' yer kind intentions, Phil jewel," returned Molly, regarding him gratefully with the one eye which was not covered by the table-cloth—I beg its pardon, *pocket-handkerchief*—aforementioned. "Shure it's nothin' but what's dacent and civil I ever heerd with ye or found with ye, and—oh!" broke off Molly as her amiable delineations of Phil's good qualities was abruptly cut short by a stoon of more than ordinary malignity. And when she resumed it was the toothache again, the plagued toothache, that was nippin', nippin' like a bad conscience, and the ear that had got it as bad as the tooth, not to spake of her eye and the sinews of her neck that sent her near out of her rayson.

"Ah, Phil jewel," continued Molly, "if ye can do anythin' for me, for the love of heaven do it soon and sudden; and shure its meself 'll pray for ye as long as I live, and maybe I'll have it in me power to do as much for ye again."

"Oh troth, Molly dear," replied the incorrigible Phil, "I hope and trust you'll never have it in your power to do *as much for me again*, for I'm nayther longin' for the disaise nor the remedy. But here goes," he cried, and laying down his pipe on the "back stone," he prepared for action, "without any more *allycomdrawes* or *collywesters*, let us look at yer tooth." And so saying he pulled open her mouth, and after gravely inspecting the interior, "Well now," he exclaimed, "since the world was a world did you ever see sich a tooth for bigness and badness? Shure enough, Molly dear, it's an enemy in the camp he is, and it's out he'll have to come before the other dacent grinders can get mindin' their bisness with any degree of comfort or satisfaction. I say it's out he'll have to come," continued Phil, raising his voice considerably, and speaking with due professional importance, "and I'm able and willin' to pull him if you're able and willin' to have him pulled."

Now it would be stretching the truth to say that comely Molly Kavanagh was "willin'" to have her front double tooth drawn. What handsome woman would be? So, "Phil dear," she exclaimed, looking up ruefully at her tall gaunt companion, "it'll lave a terrible gap, and it'll look ugly, and I'll miss it, couldn't ye give me somethin' that would chate it into good-humour this time, and we'll let it alone?"

"Nothin' at all!" exclaimed the inexorable Phil, stoutly; "not all the brandy, and whisky, and turpentine, and ginger, and saltpetre, and pepper, and cloves, and tobacco, and snuff, and soda, and salt, and soot, in the county would bring that big thief to rayson."

"Ay, ay, Phil," replied Molly, with a whimsical attempt at a smile that turned into something very like a grin of pain; "but it's bekase it doesn't belong to yerself that ye talk in such a bould heartless way about it."



Just then, however, bang, twang, went the nerve, lending such stinging force to Phil's declarations that poor Molly was constrained to submit. At all events she was constrained to keep silence; and taking advantage of her speechless agony, Phil, who was now really anxious for an operation, chose, in her case, to consider that silence "gave consent." So rising up with all due professional gravity and importance, and addressing Mrs. Kavanagh with the air of an oracle, he directed her to sit "jist right in the middle of the flure," whilst he searched for a piece of string. Into his pocket he dived for this purpose, which for length and capaciousness, and multiplicity of contents, might have equalled the pocket of the shadowless man himself. There were two or three apples, the key of his door, a piece of red keel, a measuring tape, a stud off his shirt, a lead pencil, a miscellaneous collection of nails, an old pen-knife, his tobacco-pouch and match-box, an old ivory head of his staff, two or three ballads, and the story of Robin Hood printed on a few shabby and torn old leaves; there was a fishing-line rolled up in a clew round its cork, and there was a little ball of worsted with a darning-needle stuck in it; and, finally, there were cords and twines without number, all in one hopeless tangle of every size, from the embryo rope to the common blue grocery twine, in which latter description he abounded. From this tangle of odds and ends Phil drew a long stout string, one end of which he fastened to the refractory tooth, and the other he tied to an opposite peg in the wall; next he proceeded to bring the tongs to a white heat in the fire. Molly in the meantime eyed these preparations with manifest terror and suspicion. But she kept her place "like a man," as she had been earnestly exhorted to do. "Now then!" cried the tall gaunt Phil, and snatching the red-hot tongs from the fire, he snapped them right at Molly's nose.

The immediate effect was of course an involuntary jerk back of the head upon her part, the suddenness and violence of which snapped the rebel tooth completely out, fangs and all, and that, as good luck would have it, without carrying off any of its unoffending neighbours, or breaking the jaw, or committing any other little blunders or trifling devastations of that sort, which under the circumstances were no way improbable. As it was, however, nothing could have happened better; indeed, as the long-visaged Phil expressed it with a faint grin of self-gratulation, "Everything went off to his entire satisfaction and *applause*!" To his applause truly in a more literal sense of the term than he inferred, for Molly gave him great applause, and renown also; causing the fame of that tooth-pulling exploit to go out abroad into all those parts.

For herself, so soon as she had sufficiently recovered from the surprise and shock, she rose up and shook hands warmly with Phil, declaring herself to be more fully convinced than ever of his great skill as an amateur medical practitioner in general, and a finished dental surgeon in particular.

## A POET'S MOODS.

## VII.

AS day by day the years go on,  
I sometimes sit and ponder,  
Will all be gone when love is gone?  
What comes instead, I wonder?

It must be strange to wake at morn,  
And not fall back on dreaming,  
Not e'en to feel one is forlorn,  
Nor miss the love-lights gleaming.

So day by day, so old and grey,  
The people go on living,  
Till life hath taken all away,  
And death begins its giving.

## VIII.

Little mother, little daughter,  
Over all the land we go;  
We can cross the running water,  
Though the fairy speech we know.  
We can set the hare-bells ringing,  
We can feed on clover mead,  
Singing, singing, ever singing,  
Love doth answer all our need.

O, hey, the glassy river,  
O, hey, the bonny river,  
Where all the day  
The shadows play,  
And rushes gleam and quiver.  
The silver drops so cool and sweet  
Come trickling o'er our dusty feet,  
As through the shallow ford we go,  
And neither time nor distance know,  
Adown the sunny river.

## IX.

Rain-drops, tear-trops,  
All the world is weeping,  
Not a sorrow lieth still,  
Streaming clouds have drowned the hill,  
And the sun is sleeping.

White clouds, bright clouds,  
Through the nimbus peeping.  
Is it thunder? is it rain?  
Will the darkness come again?  
Or the light up-creeping?

Swift light, strong light,  
O'er the zenith sweeping,  
Now the sun awakes to reign,  
Sweetness overcometh pain,  
Joy from sorrow reaping.

## X.

Trust me, dearest, could I ask it?  
Did a shadow of untruth  
Rear its ghostly front before me,  
Even from my vanished youth,  
Were my life not crystal clear  
I would turn and leave you, dear.

Trust me only for a little,  
I would trust you, friend, for aye,  
With no plighted troth upon you,  
With your thoughts all free to stray,  
Could your heart find fitter rest  
Mine should still keep empty nest.

Trust me, dearest, for your soul's sake,  
Could I be the thing you fear  
Then were love indeed a vileness,  
Better that it came not near;  
Grapes from thistles men may glean,  
Never stain from thing so clean.

## XI.

Courage, dear heart, we must not both despair,  
Somewhere the sun is shining even now,  
Shining on laughing brooks and meadows fair,  
Stirring the very breeze that frets your brow;  
Surely the path will open farther on—  
'Tis but a little way that we have gone.

Yes, it is hard, the drenching, blinding mist,  
That if it could would shut me out from you;  
The snake Despair that from its fastness hissed,  
The fair false hope that to the ravine drew;  
But we were saved, we are God's children yet,  
He will not let us go though we forget.

And even on our toilsome way there come  
 Sweet scents from bruised flowers and winds astray;  
 The sound of sunshine in the wild bees' hum,  
 While tamed with fear the birds around us play;  
 The very dumb things gain some good from harm,  
 Courage from fright, and boldness from alarm.

Still, it is hard, no darkness will be light,  
 Though we should call it light from night till morn;  
 We can but wait until the dawning bright  
 Shall show us how it was we were forlorn:  
 Not all forlorn, through deepest darkness, friend;  
 Love's joy alone doth never change nor end.

## XII.

Little eyes so softly wooing,  
 Purely blind and purely wise,  
 Knowing naught of evil-doing,  
 Knowing much of good dear eyes,  
 Shining on me holy sweet,  
 Gentle thoughts your gaze should meet.

Little hands with restless motion  
 Fluttering about my cheek,  
 Little feet with swift commotion  
 Rushing some new joy to seek,  
 Bringing tidings fearlessly,  
 Never doubting sympathy.

Little heart so swiftly gladdened,  
 Little soul so soon cast down,  
 Little lips with curves so saddened  
 At a moment's passing frown.  
 Let me humbly kneel beside thee,  
 Only God is fit to guide thee.

S. A. D. I.



## AGAINST THE WIND.

HOW disagreeable the wind is! Disagreeable indeed! I should think it was! That's a very mild phrase. Abominable, detestable, atrocious, are all mild phrases, when used in connection with wind.

I hate wind. Pooh, pooh, stuff and nonsense! don't tell me it is wicked to hate it, because it is a natural phenomenon. Scarlet fever and small-pox are natural phenomena, but I should not be considered wicked, I suppose, for hating them.

I am prepared to show that wind is not only disagreeable, but now-a-days, totally unnecessary; for what possible utility can there be in an element which at the best will only drive a vessel through the water at about half the rate of speed obtainable from an ordinary steam-engine, paddle or screw.

Windmills are no longer requisite as a means of preparing our daily bread. Steam can be easily made to do their work as efficiently, and with much more persistency, for we all know that when the wind drops then the mill stops, and the wind always does drop when there is most corn to be ground.

The art of ballooning is at present in far too undeveloped a state to induce any one to argue that wind is requisite on that account, and until some means have been invented to regulate the speedy transit of an æronautical machine from London to Paris with regularity, punctuality, and despatch, wind ought to be suppressed. In this nineteenth century there is no possible need for it, for beyond propelling ships, turning windmills, and elevating balloons, I should like to know what useful occupation can be found for Boreas. Boys addicted to kite-flying might suffer some deprivation, but boys have to suffer, and their interests must not be weighed against those of the community at large, and men who adopt the system of "flying kites," do so as a means of "raising the wind," which in itself is another reason why there should be none to raise.

So much for its inutility, but I am now farther prepared to show that there is nothing so absolutely tormenting amongst external circumstances as wind; there is nothing so calculated to bring down upon you the derision and ridicule of your fellow-men; nothing which so thoroughly debases you in your own eyes, and so detracts from that nobility of deportment of which you are justly proud.

Meeting it, for instance, at a street corner, it tears at you with such ungovernable fury, that you inevitably lose your much-prized erect and soldier-like carriage, and become quite bent and crippled, as you combat the force of the gale.

Craning forward, with head bowed to the superior power, tears streaming down your face, and your legs nearly taken from under you, how can you fail to know that you are presenting a most pitiable appearance? The corner turned however, things are not mended but only reversed, and your enemy swoops at you now from behind, running you along, as if you were a little boy again, under the torture of some bigger playmate, taken by the scruff of your neck, and hurried on with might and main, at the will of your tor-



mentor; a mere cork, a feather, a most contemptible waif and stray. You vainly endeavour to maintain a perpendicular posture; why, bless your heart! you are leaning backwards at a most acute and preposterous angle, and your coat tails are probably flapping over each shoulder, your knees are useless uncontrollable joints, and your arms, if left a moment to themselves, are blown helplessly about, like linen hanging out to dry! This is bad, but by no means the worst. Is it possible to conceive any condition more humiliating than wanting to blow your nose under such circumstances? for, of course, the higher the wind, the more your nose wants blowing. Both your hands are occupied, one on the top of your hat, squeezing it on to your forehead to the utter stoppage of all circulation, and an inevitable headache, the other clutching madly at the brim to prevent its spinning high up into the air. Yes, there is another stage, more humiliating even than this, and that is, when at last driven to despair, you succeed in extracting your pocket-handkerchief, but unable to make the slightest use of it with one hand (for it flies straight out from you, like a flag, or nearly blinds you by flapping in your face), you relinquish for a moment the grip your other hand has on your hat, and the wind does at last succeed in carrying it off.

This is the climax of your misery, ignominy, and degradation. You turn suddenly round, and the first thing you do is to run bump up against the person immediately following you, inevitably treading upon his pet corn. He execrates you, but heeding him not, you dash madly after your lost property, which, by this time, is two hundred yards down the street, just passing under the feet of a cab horse, and only escaping by a miracle utter annihilation from the wheels of the succeeding omnibus.

Away you go after it, amidst the gibes of the men, the delight of the boys, and the simpering sniggers of the women, for I maintain there is no class of humanity whose risible faculties are proof against the ridiculous appearance of an individual running after his hat, when it has been blown off. They have no sympathy for you, and though they will make vigorous efforts to stop it, they do so with a certain air of mockery and derision.

If they succeed in capturing the fugitive they can't hand it to you, no, not even the politest of them, without an ill-suppressed chuckle, and an expression of hope that it is not very much damaged, well knowing all the while that having been rolled in the mud, floated through a puddle, twice kicked by the horses, once crushed with a wheel, and several times stamped upon in the pursuit, it must be all but done for, yet, confound them, they will have the hypocrisy to say they hope you will be able to put it to rights.

If you do not hate your species at that moment, well, then, you are a better-tempered man than I take you to be. The degradation of your condition is not lessened one atom if you effect the capture yourself, for, by so doing, you narrowly escape being knocked down and run over, and anathematized by drivers for obliging them to pull up to save your life. You nearly dash your brains out against the lamp-post, by which and the gutter your hat has been brought up, as stooping you make a savage grab at it, when it is once within your reach. And oh! what a sight it presents, when at last you have succeeded in regaining it! Battered, muddy, and wet, probably with several

holes driven through it from your having wildly endeavoured to spear it like an otter with the point of your umbrella, it has become the most dilapidated and woe-begone piece of personal attire that can well be imagined.

But you are a philosopher of course, and try by a sickly smile to appear as if it was of no consequence. To carry this fiction a little further you disdain wiping it very much; you give it a shake, smooth it with your hand, to the entire destruction of your glove, and cram it on your head, regardless of the grit and mud (for what do you care about such trifles) which now mingle with your hair, trickle down your neck, and lacerate your forehead.

You can't see what you look like, and you pretend not to understand that the rude remarks of the passers-by have any reference to you. The impertinent inquiries from the boys as to what tradesman it is connected with the hatting interest who receives your patronage must be addressed to some individual on the other side of the way, and you naturally conclude that the observation habitually in use amongst our street arabs, "What a shocking bad 'at," is a spontaneous exclamation that, like the rest of its kind, is *à propos* to nothing.

It is only when a friendly plate-glass window reveals to you your appearance that you allow the slightest suspicion to dawn upon you that your "personel" is the point in question. Nevertheless, you continue to smile, being an individual of no ordinary strength of will, but at the same time you take the earliest opportunity of retiring from public gaze, by diving into your own or a friend's quarters to refit, considering yourself extremely lucky that you were able to do so before running against the young person whom you slightly affect.

Now mark! this is the result of wind. Nothing but that detestable, tearing wind, which, besides all that has happened, has blown your hair behind your ears, covered your face with smuts, filled your eyes with miniature paving-stones, and given you a supply of impromptu tooth-powder sufficient to last you for a week. It has ruffled your temper together with your beard, disarranged the fit of your garments, given you a headache, in a word, utterly ruined your comfort and personal appearance.

Or, again, suppose you are a sportsman and addicted to fly-fishing—a nice time you will have of it then in a high wind! How utterly some of your most dexterous casts will be rendered abortive, and your delicate gear frequently destroyed from being hitched high and tight into the branches of a tree.

Wind, too, is the sworn enemy of the rifleman, and a Ross or a Jopling will sometimes miss the target, and go plump into the mud, at but two hundred yards, if a fitful gust of wind only happens to come across the range just as the trigger is being gently squeezed.

Driving in a high wind, is another occasion for being forcibly reminded what a mistake this element is.

You are a pretty good whip, and you know where to let the lash fall if the pace is to be increased; but don't you think it! the wind catches the thong, and twists it cleverly into part of the harness. Yes, there it is, tied tightly, just as if you had got down and done it with your own hands. You

can't loosen it; the more you wriggle it about the firmer it holds. You make up your mind to leave it; but just now the horse wants the whip terribly, for he likes the wind even less than you do, and is by no means inclined to put out much pace against it. Eventually you stop, and get out at the risk, of course, of everything being turned topsy-turvy in the way of rugs, aprons, and other contents of your vehicle, which are thus all exposed to the fury of the blast.

To my thinking, all wind is alike disgusting, and I consider that when it blows from the south-west it is quite as objectionable, if there be much of it, as Mr. Kingsley's brave "north-easter;" the one overwhelms you with heat and moisture, the other subdues you by cold and drought. They alike irritate you, and it is only according to your temperament as to which punishes you the most. I have heard that there are people (I am glad to say I don't know them) who like what is called "a good blow," who go out to get one, who talk about a fine bracing air, and say, "That's the thing to give you an appetite, sir!" (I dislike being braced, and never have an appetite.) These, however, are most likely the same monsters who delight in "a sail," are fond of yachting, and who select the roughest weather to cross the Channel in; who are perfectly even-tempered, who are never sea-sick, who never catch cold, who smoke the strongest cigars immediately after breakfast, and consider three hours' sleep sufficient rest for any man.

Yes, they are probably all this; but I'll guarantee they are not sketchers from nature, for, I hereby challenge and defy any human being to point out a more abominable or fatal obstruction to sketching from nature than wind. I stoutly maintain that in no other out-door pursuit or occupation, either of pleasure or business, does the self-same element so thoroughly baffle you. It is only the artist, therefore, who can estimate fully *how* disagreeable the wind is. The man who has lost his hat is a miserable, contemptible wretch, and there may be a dozen other situations equally ignoble, and derogatory to our manhood, all resulting from wind, such as having to sit with the window open, when you have influenza, because the chimney smokes; or contending with an umbrella turned inside out; or endeavouring to refold a newspaper whilst reading on the beach; or your wife's bonnet-strings persistently fluttering across your eyes or mouth at the very moment you were trying to get a peep into that brougham, or going to say "How do you do," to an old chum, and many more such miseries; but these I will not even stop to think of, whilst picturing to myself the agony and despair of a poor painter on a hill-side, or a sea-shore, during what sailors call "a fresh breeze." It swoops over the cliff at him, it rushes upon him from the front and rear, and from each flank dives into his pockets, wriggles up his trowsers, and commits every havoc with his comfort that is possible; but the way in which he suffers more than any other creature living is from the hold it gets upon his easel and apparatus generally.

These are all fair points of attack, of which the enemy takes advantage. It sends his umbrella flying just as he has made it fast by chains and ropes, scatters all sorts of debris upon his wet paint, lulls a little to deceive him when he is about to make a particularly fine stroke, but plunges at him more

violently than ever at the fatal moment when his hand approaches the canvas, wabbling it to and fro, and bringing the brush into violent contact with the surface, making blobs of unmeaning colour, where delicate touches were intended.

No mortal, I repeat, has any adequate conception of the irritation which Boreas can commit, but a painter. No! in these days of scientific progress, some chemical apparatus should be contrived to put down wind, just as there is a composition to put out fire.

Nobody really likes it, or wants it; a slight movement in the atmosphere is all very well; but wind, high tearing wind, is an abomination.

Animals suffer from it, and dislike it as much as men. Watch the cattle in the fields, and see how they will dodge to get under the lee of a hedge or bank; and whenever they are unfortunate enough to be in pasture without such shelter, they sulkily turn their backs to the aggressor and huddle together in moody disgust.

Precisely in this manner may we see groups of our seafaring population, at any ports on the coast, congregating at street corners, behind boats, and against low walls, ever and anon peeping round with a wistful glance to windward, evidently in the hope of catching some meteorological sign from which they can indulge the hope that the wind is going to abate.

All of them, men, women, and children, hate it; and finally, when we come to consider the frightful casualties from shipwreck, of which many of them have been eye-witnesses, it is not wonderful that they should.

With us landmen, the destruction of our best hat, or the loss of our temper, is generally the worst, perhaps, that can ensue; but to the mariner, high wind is fraught with a danger of which we have but little conception; to him it is a matter of life or death; and

In the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them,  
With deafening clamour, in the slippery shrouds,

he hears through their roar the wail of desolate wives and mothers, and sees thrown on the shore, from amidst the tossing, foaming waves, the motionless form of many a hardy fellow who, till now, had successfully baffled the attacks of that persistent enemy of mankind—a high wind.



## LADY NAIRNE'S SONGS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CITOYENNE JACQUELINE."

IN the full blaze of Burns's fame as the song-writer of Scotland, the light of other song-writers was extinguished. Chief among those whose names were forgotten in the one name familiar alike to peer and peasant were Tannahill and Lady Nairne.

It is with the last this paper has to do—a song-writer one need have small hesitation in classing among the truest lyrists of any country for simple naturalness, humour, and pathos.

Whether there is much call to rescue from general oblivion the name of Lady Nairne, who while living cared so little for the breath of popular applause that she hardly took the trouble of acknowledging many of her songs, may be an open question; but there can be no doubt that to remember, and contrast as the lavish fruit of one generous intellect such songs as 'The Laird o' Cockpen,' 'The Land o' the Leal,' 'Caller Herrin,' one of the best sets of 'Charlie is my Darling,' 'The Auld House,' 'The Rowan Tree,' and 'The Twa Doos,' is both wise and profitable.

I have not much to say of Lady Nairne personally. Her most peculiar qualities, after her strong affections, seem to have been the sense and modesty which made her care little for individual distinction. It is sufficient to say that she began her life as Caroline Oliphant, a namesake of Prince Charlie's, and the fairest woman in Strathearn, where her father was a gently-born laird of an old Jacobite stock. She married young, and she lost both husband and son (an only child) while she was still in her prime. In her aged widowhood she gave to Dr. Chalmers one of the most munificent grants for his work at the West Port of Edinburgh, accompanied by a request that the donor's name should not be mentioned. In other respects Caroline, Lady Nairne, like the novelist Jane Austin, belonged emphatically to her people, her home, and her own country side. It is in her songs that she belongs to broad Scotland, to the Canadian backwood, and to the Australian bush; in fact, to wherever the Scotch tongue is spoken. It is therefore of her songs that I propose to treat.

Surely a great and woful change must have come over the spirit of the country if it is true, as some people allege, that Negro melodies have superseded the 'Laird o' Cockpen,'—a song which at different times has been erroneously attributed to Sir Walter Scott and to Joanna Baillie, and which every member of every Scotch audience has heard crooned or chirped in glee and waggery.

But do all who know 'The Laird o' Cockpen' appreciate its matchless truth to the time, alike as respects scene and dramatis personæ, its fine suggestive touches, and its Scotch *wut*, which is woman's archness here? Has not familiarity to some extent bred insensibility to its merits? Don't we take them for granted, and never count or measure them, like the good offices of kindred?



Let us look at the laird again, at his antecedents, his accompaniments, his mission, and how he fared—

His mind a' ta'en up wi' affairs o' the state.

Don't we all see the pompous, pedantic body, a Baron Bradwardine in nature, a Dumbiedykes in position?

He wanted a wife his braw house to keep.

What! for no reason of love or friendship, for no ancient kindness or later tenderness, for no rue, or passion, or pure life-long devotion? Only for vanity, and a vanity, too, which is at once of the grossest and pettiest description, that his gear might not be wasted, and his fine show spoilt. Truly for no other reason; since another line chronicles the laird's sole commendation of the object of his pursuit—

At his table-head he thought she'd look well.

At the table-head of Cockpen, before the haggis, and over against the punch-bowl. In the old days to look well at the table-head of some laird, or soldier of fortune, or Edinburgh lawyer, was to tempt any woman of spirit to swear strongest faith, and humblest obedience to the one man in the world for her. No wonder then that the laird, pawky though croose, puffed out the reflection which closes the verse—

But favours frae women are fashious to seek,

or, as it is sometimes rendered—

Favours wi' wooin' are fashious to seek.

Yes, certainly, "fashious" to such as the laird, for the contrary assertion would be a libel on the whole womenkind of old Scotland. But had the laird experience, think you? Had he tried the trick before and been worsted, though he had by no means grown a sadder and a wiser man in the process? Anyhow we are quite sure such is the laird's own sententious, sardonic reflection before he ran the gauntlet of a woman's scorn.

Down by yon dyke-side, a ledly did dwell.

How distinct the locality is in the mind's eye of a Scot!—the long dry-stone dyke, the bright eyes of fumarts and stots glancing out at the chinks, yellow-hammers tapping the shells there on a sunny spring day, and the bean and oat fields lying at so dead a level on Claverse-ha'-lea that the dyke becomes the most prominent feature of the landscape.

And what an incomparable mocking summary is given of the national pride and poverty (to do the laird justice, he is not mercenary—perhaps he is too conceited for that) in the couplet which barely sums up the lady's advantages:—

Macleish's ae dochter o' Claverse-ha'-lea,  
A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

As the laird only wanted a careful housekeeper to preside creditably at his board, we can understand that he did not go in for all the graces and virtues.

But two qualifications were indispensable—that the lady should be brought up to habits of thrift (involved in her penniless condition which, however, was unclogged with any encumbrance of sisters—single ladies expecting to pay long visits to Cockpen), and that she should be “gentle” to cap the pretensions of the strutting laird.

Next follows the laird's costume. How grand and effective it was or should have been!

His wig was weel powthered as gude as 'twas new,

His waistcoat was white, his coat it was blue,

He put on a ring, a sword and cocked hat;

And wha could refuse the laird wi' a' that?

The laird's own confident interpolation and comment we echo,—who, indeed? For, pausing and contemplating the laird in his splendour, and knowing the nature of silly, impressionable women, we begin to quake for Mistress Jean.

He took the grey mare—

I appeal to my readers, could the laird have ridden a horse of another sex, or another colour? Do you know what her name must have been? Meg, or Jess, or Dimple—

——and he rode cannilie—

dignified, deliberate, comfortable, as far as circumstances would admit. Could you for one moment fancy the laird whipping and spurring like a drunken Tam o' Shanter?

And rapp'd at the yett o' Claverse-ha'-lea.

There was no hesitation, no hanging back at the last moment. Don't you envy him his pluck? Ah! but don't begin to envy too soon,

Gae tell Mistress Jean to come speedily ben,  
She's wanted to speak wi' the Laird o' Cockpen.

No phrasing, or complimenting—no beseeching of an audience or bespeaking of grace—but a direct, imperative summons—Mistress Jean to be honoured by speech with the great man.

Before proceeding to the masterly sketch of Mistress Jean, let us disabuse our minds of a false impression which change of habits and customs may have produced—namely, that Mistress Jean was a lady of a certain age. Whether in such a case the answer would have been the same, I leave ladies of a certain age to decide, simply remarking, that there is not a grain of evidence in the song that Mistress Jean was out of her teens. In the generation in which the hero and heroine flourished, Mistress before the Christian name was the honourable distinction of every well-born lass; and lasses universally wore of a morning mutches such as

——the mutch wi' red ribands.

Go back to your Boswell's Johnson, or to the plays of Drury Lane in Sheridan's time, and you will find queenly Mrs. Thrale's young daughter, Lydia Languish, Lady Townley, making their first appearance for the day in mob or fly caps, while the mention of them in the evenings “in their hair” sounds delightfully crisp, and brings back Sydney Smith's wish to sit

at hot London dinner parties "in his bones." Then as to the heroine's occupation—

Mistress Jean she was making the elder-flower wine.

Not only must its fragrant fumes have risen gratefully to the laird's nostrils, and caused his pursed-up mouth to water, but it likewise testified amply to the judiciousness of his selection, and the fitness of the future Lady Cockpen for her part in the drama of life, for such delicate brewsts was the elegant fancy work of the day. Ye gods! what cockie-leekie, kail-brose, butter-sops, and dishes of tea she would prepare for the laird!

Mistress Jean, she was making the elder-flower wine.

Oh! what brings the laird here at sic a like time?

That sharp counter-query to the laird's challenge has an ominous ring. It might have made the rosy gills of the dauntless assailant turn blue. It is cool, cutting, desperately reasonable, and with a peppery spice of testiness in it. Beyond question, Mistress Jean had all her wits about her, and remained mistress of herself and the situation. And she was penniless. If unwed she might have to repair to a town and take in lodgers, dress and mend laces, or practise the mantua-making and gum-flower trade, to gain a pittance, and keep body and soul together, before her history ended. The laird would have been a great match for her; she would have worn still richer silks at Cockpen. Cockpen would certainly have been a "bien down-sittin'"; might have been a cosy jointure house. Brave, true Mistress Jean!

Mark, at the same time, the strong dash of womanly coquetry in Mistress Jean's actions. She was seeking the puffing, blowing laird's presence in anything but a favourable temper; probably she guessed his stolid, churlish, impudent suit, and had already given it an answer in her heart; yet

She put off her apron, threw on her silk gown,

Her mutch wi' red ribands, and cam' awa' doun.

Yes, she made herself killing to give the poor man his congé and his death-blow in one interview. She would smite him with her charms, whilst she extinguished his hopes and caused him never, never to forget her—caused him to fret and fume until he lay stretched on the best bed at Cockpen, had sent for a solicitor to draw out his testament, and a Mess John to pray for his soul.

And when she cam' ben he booed fu' low.

Was the dull prig of a laird really impressed with the charms of his mistress, enhanced as they were by "the mutch wi' red ribands?" or was it the mere outside lacquer of manner sitting stiffly on the wise bumpkin, that made him "boo fu' low?" We may safely believe the latter, for he showed no further symptoms of being overcome, but proceeded straight to business, and announced the object of his visit, short and sharp as a pistol-shot, precisely as he had demanded her company.

What was his errand he soon let her know,

without the smallest concern for Mistress Jean's feelings; without the most

distant fear of overwhelming her with the awkwardness and pain of rejecting his bold proposal; without so much as a thought of the woman's shamefacedness, and instinctive reverence for her own womanhood. As "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," the dolt of a laird walked up to a hostile fortress without even the name or form of a siege, summoned it to surrender, and blurted out his intentions—yes, his intentions rather than his wishes. It is more than likely that he took snuff, flirted the powder from his wig to show his ring, and leant at once on his back bone and his sword, while the aggrieved, incensed woman looked down on him from the height of her indulgence, of her revolted generosity and tenderness.

But the laird did not understand a look. Perhaps he even ogled back with disgusting exultation and glee in his round eyes; for was he not *amazed* when the lady was forced to utter a single, significant word, the mere imagination of which has made stout men quake? But the laird would not quake, and why then cast useless minced words like pearls before swine?

Amazed was the laird when the ledly said "Na,"  
And wi' a low curtsey she turned awa'.

And very loud the wrathful lady said it. You may be assured that the deafest side of the wooden head might plainly hear her before she dropped the half disdainful, half formal curtsey, that last most fatal sign, which indicated beyond mistake that the lady was still mistress of herself in her wrath, and knew quite well what she was about, and would never reconsider or annul her sentence.

Thus ended the venture of a laird's wooing. We have only to follow for a little way the chopfallen but unrepentant laird on his return to Cockpen, where he carried the unpalatable remembrance of his disgraceful failure.

Still wonderfully in keeping is the narrative. "Dumbfounded" was the laird, not heartbroken. Mistress Jean did not need to grow remorseful over her unmixed indignation and cruelty, for—

—nae sigh did he gie.

Not one sigh for high-spirited, disinterested Mistress Jean, who would be so true a wife to a true man!

He mounted his mare and he rode cannilie.

When in his life would he do otherwise? What on earth would jog him and his beast to a quicker pace? What living creature would infuse richness and salt to replace the poverty and stagnation of the blue fluid in the laird's veins? He was not the man of whom it could ever be written—

Grat his een baith blear and blin',  
Spak' o' loupin' ower a linn.

Mistress Jean might keep her pity for a more sensitive, more reckless man.

The laird was actually unshaken in his solemn conceit, the thick skin of his self-satisfaction had hardly received a prick, and he was consoling himself in his own fashion as he slowly left behind him the dyke-side, the bean-fields, and the lea, and turned into the narrow limits of his own den, with the cunning, mocking reflection—

She's daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen.

To pass over the space from comedy to tragedy, from humour to pathos, with sure steps and unerring power, is the endowment of genius, and such is the broad transition Lady Nairne makes from the 'Laird o' Cockpen' to the 'Land o' the Leal.'

It has been said, with warrant, that the only song deserving the name of sacred in the Scotch tongue is the 'Land o' the Leal.' But the 'Land o' the Leal' is in itself worth a thousand, and is among songs like an army with banners. The name alone is a triumph of word-painting. Like other familiar things, we hold it fast as a treasure, but we cease to think of the exquisite lingering beauty of the alliteration, and the fullness and fineness of the expression.

With a figure the most touching and the most perfect, as thousands know whose breaking hearts have seen it fulfilled, while they would have given half their lives to delay its fulfilment, the song begins soft and low, as Christian faith and resignation sing the inevitable—

I'm wearing awa', Jean,  
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, Jean,  
I'm wearing awa',  
To the Land o' the Leal.

With such words as are nowhere to be found out of holy writ, that land where we all hope to be is described—

There's nae sorrow there, Jean,  
There's neither could nor care, Jean,  
The day is aye fair,  
I' the Land o' the Leal.

Beautiful and noble is the allusion to the great finished work of man's redemption; meek and mild the reference to the old sorrow become tender as a joy; and fond and cheering the final comfort to the stricken watcher—

But haud ye leal and true, Jean,  
Your day it's wearing through, Jean,  
And I'll welcome you,  
To the Land o' the Leal.

Who that has heard 'The Land o' the Leal' sung in a Scotch gloaming to a hushed group of listeners will not confirm my words that there is no song, not even of Burns, nor of Moore, nor of the French Béranger, nor the German Heine which approaches on its own ground 'The Land o' the Leal'?

As a local provincial song—a song which takes up a district and a class with their intense homely experience, and photographs all to the life, I would instance 'Caller Herrin'.' I think this is less a national than an east-country song, and that the herrings mentioned in it are not the Lochfyne herrings, the *Glasgow magistrates*, but emphatically "new drawn frae the Forth." In the ring and the repetition of the chorus, I see the quaint little east-country towns in the bustle of what is to them the harvest of their trade. Besides, I believe that it is in these towns, more than among the crowds and the multitudinously-varied occupations of the west, that there are preserved the distinctive traits of the race of fishermen, and particularly of fishwives—



those bronzed, massive, loud-tongued women, who are capable of singular heights of faithfulness and marvellous depths of devotion. Such are the women who with keen, defiant gibe, not free from haughtiness, like the gibes of the splendid peasant women about old Rome, submit to the little pantomime and retail it afterwards for their own half-contemptuous diversion.

When the creel wi' herrin' passes,  
Ladies clad in silks and laces  
Gather in their braw pelisses,  
Cast their heads and screw their faces.

But such supercilious squeamish airs did not mark the bearing of gentle, high-bred Caroline, Baroness Nairne, on whose lips hung the accents of the kindly Scotch tongue, who looked around on her kind "loving, not loathing," and could share with something nigh to prophetic inspiration the weal and the woe of the humblest of her countrymen and countrywomen.

One verse of 'Caller Herrin' strikes me as being such a feat of melody of Tennyson accomplished when he made the rhyme of his verse in one instance ripple like a brook, and in another imitate the monotonous dash of the waves. Surely there is something, also, of the roll of the sea, on whose heaving breast float the fishers' nets and rock the fishers' boats, in the lines—

When you're sleeping on your pillows,  
Think you not of our poor fellows,  
Darkling as they face the billows,  
All to fill the woven willows?

In the last verse of the song, the key-note, which has been sounding heartily and happily until now, is changed with consummate art, or rather with the reach of a true poet's instinct, the writer passing all at once to the very deepest feeling:—

Who'll buy caller herrin' ?  
They're not brought here without brave daring.

Then she speaks of those randy fishwives as

Wives and mithers maist despairin',

and puts into their mouths the wild figure born of their despair, and the 'hale-some fish and dainty fairin', are in the flash of one moment of misery converted into "lives of men."

Wives and mithers maist despairin'  
Ca' them lives o' men !

The reader may remember a later echo of the same wild figure—

Oh, men with sisters dear !  
Oh, men with mothers and wives !  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives.

Lady Nairne has many stirring and sweet Jacobite songs. She had more title to Jacobite association, and incurred less charge of feudal affectation than most writers. Living somewhat removed from us in point of time, born of a Jacobite house, named veritably after bonnie Prince Charlie, and married into a family whose honours had been attainted at the rebellion, Lady Nairne

was peculiarly qualified to give us 'He's Coming Again,' 'A Hundred Pipers and a', and 'The Auld House,' in which her own early home is recalled, and her father and mother sit for the carefully-finished portraits of 'The Auld Laird,' and 'The Auld Leddy.' But foremost to me of Lady Nairne's Jacobite songs is her short version of 'Charlie is my Darling.' What greater testimony to the love the Tory women of Scotland bore the young Ascanius? what more artistic reckoning and measuring of their loyalty and their sacrifices could we have than in the record—

They proudly wore the milk-white rose  
For him they held so dear;  
And gave their sons to Charlie,  
The young Chevalier?

And what greater pathos than in the simple, piteous, summing up—

Oh! there were many beating hearts,  
And many a hope and fear,  
And there was many a prayer put up  
For the young Chevalier?

Many a prayer put up for the poor lad who burst into tears at the retreat from Derby, escaped in a servant's livery after the rout at Culloden, lay down in the night of wind and rain "and slept beneath a bush o' broom," followed Flora Macdonald in women's weeds, fled as a fugitive to France, and, alas! alas! lived to die a debauched imbecile at an Italian court.

Lady Nairne's songs are numerous, and, collected, form a volume for her admirers. In nearly all the cunning hand of the master at once of mirth and of melancholy is apparent. Unlike the sensational literature of the day, they are eminently wholesome. Sound and sweet as a nut is the spirit of the wise, kindly woman who, for her own pleasure, and the mere enriching of the world of song, sang like any mavis, or merle, or more lightly-lilting lark.

Having tried shortly, and I trust not altogether without success, to show how much Scotch song owes to Lady Nairne, who has all the picturesqueness of Tannahill in his 'Gloomy Winter's now awa,' the quaint homeliness and the domestic bliss portrayed by poor Jean Adams in her 'There's nae Luck about the House,' the romantic devotion of William Glen in his 'Wee Bird,' and who has once and again come near to Burns and Hogg in the thrill of their passion, I hope every reader will agree with me that her songs deserve to be cherished and sung by high and low, down to the latest generation.



## SOMETHING ABOUT A "CAROUSEL."

IT is, and has been for ages past, the custom in most towns and villages in France, to celebrate a fête once a year, during the summer months. In some respects these fêtes greatly resemble our ordinary English fairs, if one may judge from the indispensable array of booths and stalls, of all sizes and pretensions, that so plentifully abound. In other respects, however, they differ, as will hereafter appear. A large proportion of these booths are stocked with gingerbread, *gauffres*,\* native lollipops, hot fried potatoes, looking very greasy, and other edibles of an equally varied description; others with divers speculative concerns at which one may risk five sous to gain a franc (?); others at which opportunities are offered for firing at oscillating clay pipes, and wooden dummies, with little foul guns, or at antediluvian-looking pigeons of the same material, coated with perforated pieces of tin, at a very small damage, to use a very modern phrase.

Here also the universal equestrian exercises (circular) are largely indulged in by the small folk of the place, at the risk of making themselves giddy,—a sensation, by the way, they rather enjoy than otherwise; and last and least, sundry card-sharps, thimble dittos, and rogues of every stamp and die, who eke out a pittance by the aid of their execrable wits, which they employ to the undisguised discomfiture of those blockheads who have more of the fool and less of the knave than themselves. On these occasions different entertainments, and rifle, archery, and other matches, are held, and here too are determined the merits of the respective musical societies of the neighbourhood.

It may not be generally known that nearly every town, and even village, in France has its musical society, either instrumental or vocal, which competes with its fellow societies in the vicinity, once a year, regularly, at a fête in some adjoining town. The utmost importance is attached to a competition of this kind, in consequence of which it is considered as quite an event, and is looked forward to with the utmost anxiety by all.

We happened to be spending a week at Haubourdin, a village near Lille, in the north of France, when a fête of this description was celebrated. It was to last three days. Nothing was wanting in the list of items we have enumerated, even so far as regards the musical societies and shooting matches; all were there, and in full play, or rather work—for competing is work as all know who have had any experience in that line—each and everybody entered his particular sphere of amusement, and enjoyed himself after his own fashion.

The *gamins* and *gourmands* of the village flocked to the edibles; coarse-looking, lounging men, slipshod, snuffy-smelling women, and imitative children engaged in speculation; ferocious-looking gendarmes, with sweeping imperials (*inter alios*), tried their skill at the targets; the small fry mounted their viceless steeds; and tender, twining lovers took exclusive possession of

\* A peculiar kind of biscuit.

the diminutive charabanes, in which, in lieu of the more rural shade of milk-white thorns, they—

"In other's arms, breathed out the tender tale ;"

hobbedehoys, smoking vile cigars, aimed at clay pipes a yard and a half from their noses ; and ignorant novices found them mercilessly bamboozled at the card, thimble, and dice tables.

The first day was devoted to the competition of the musical societies before mentioned. This took place in the spacious gardens of the mayor of Haubourdin, which were prettily decorated for the occasion. The river flowing through the meadow was brilliantly illuminated with Chinese lanterns and other lights, which, hanging from the sides of the bridge, and shining in a double row on the tiny parapets, together with little *allumettes* of burning tar, placed at equal distances along the banks, produced a most charming effect, shedding a beautiful light all around, and revealing everything and everybody as if it had been bright noonday instead of sombre twilight. A covered platform, very tastily got up with drapery of different colours, had been erected in the centre, and an innumerable quantity of chairs provided by the village itself, which gave five thousand francs (two hundred pounds) for the occasion.

The performances, including both instrumental and vocal music, commenced at noon and terminated at a little before one o'clock at night ! a fact no doubt justly deplored by the judges.

On the following day we went to witness a spectacle which, in the native language of the placards posted about, was termed a "Carousel." We had not the slightest idea what a "Carousel" was. We had never even heard the word. Car-ous-el—Carousel? No ; an attempt to Englishify it would only have plunged us into deeper darkness and obscurity, so congratulating ourselves that we were going to see something fresh, we patiently waited till our curiosity should be satisfied. Before long, we were informed that it consisted of some feat or other effected by persons on horseback. This, however, was at best vague and indefinite, and we have a great aversion to anything vague or indefinite.

It was to commence at three in the afternoon, so at least said the placards, which, by the way, are anything but infallible, for, though we did not present ourselves for admission till half-past, we, in common with the rest of the company, had to wait another half hour before this mysterious performance actually began.

While preliminaries were being arranged, gentlemen walked their horses backwards (?) and forwards (a somewhat curious performance perhaps, and rather difficult of execution, but one very generally practised by these our neighbours across the Channel), up and down the street, and in and out the entrance to the arena, which was situated at the rear of the *mairie*, or town hall, to the great discomfiture of many intending ticket purchasers, who, seeking to avoid too close proximity with the horses' hoofs, dodged about here and there, generally contriving to get just in the way at the wrong time.

A large circle, with a beaten track for the horses, and rows of chairs placed

on a raised platform extending all round for the company, formed the scene of action. It in fact resembled a circus without a covering overhead, and with rush-bottomed chairs in lieu of carpeted seats. Immediately opposite the entrance were the judges, consisting of the mayor and others from the neighbourhood, who looked about them with becoming dignity and importance, from the centre of a small space railed round for their exclusive accommodation.

The spectators comprised individuals of a very varied description. In the lowest seats lounged those whose fumigated presence would not have added either to the immediate or after comfort of those in the upper, where sat a great number of fashionably-dressed ladies, as many gentlemen, and children innumerable, varying from the omnipresent infant, "mewling and puking in its nurse's arms," to the accomplished young gentleman, who, having just left school, attends merely with a view of descanting on the merits of the horse flesh, of which it strikes him there will be a plentiful supply, and (you needn't say anything to mamma about it) making an odd *napoléon* by speculating with certain other young gentlemen of similar pretensions as to the success of various individuals among the equestrians.

At a given signal the gate of the circle opened, and two gentlemen (the competitors were all amateurs, mostly farmers and gentlemen from the neighbourhood), mounted, made their appearance in the centre, when, guiding their horses to the side, they galloped round three times, with their beavers in their hands. One only stopped before the judges, and having made his *congé*, received his lance; the other returned to the centre to await his turn. A wooden instrument very much resembling the old-fashioned lances of the twelfth century having been handed to the former, he threw down his whip, spurred his horse to a canter, and poising the lance in his right hand, endeavoured to pierce something suspended in the air at a level with his eye. This was simply a ring about the size of the rings belonging to a horse's bit, which was attached to an iron concern planted at the edge of the platform, and hung from an iron stud by means of two narrow springs of the same metal, which, closing together at the least pressure, caused the ring to drop at the merest touch of the lance. This post had two arms, as it were, reaching over about a couple of yards on either side, from the end of each of which hung a ring. We now at once divined what was meant by a *carousel*, and recognized the old-fashioned exercise frequently mentioned in the early history of England by the name of "Riding at the ring." It was much practised in the time of the Black Prince, both by that able warrior and the young men of the age; being considered a healthful and manly exercise.

And certainly it was highly interesting. Each candidate rode three times round the course, during which, there being two posts, placed opposite each other on either side of the circus, he had six chances. As soon as he had slipped one ring off the stud on to his lance, the man stationed at the post for that purpose gave the divested arm a push, causing the whole concern to swing round, and the corresponding ring on the other side to appear in readiness for the acting competitor when he should next approach. Sometimes it happened that the point of the lance struck the part above the ring margin, making the very post tremble with the suddenness of the shock, and



causing, we should imagine, a very disagreeable sensation about the wrist. Frequently this was done with such violence, as to make the arms swing round like a bola, bringing the inner one home with astonishing force, and a loud report, to the unconscious head-piece of the perpetrator; obliging him to bow, as he passes, to whoever happens to be opposite, in a manner that would strike one as being too abrupt to be meant, and too undignified to be graceful.

Though, like many other things of a similar nature, when skilfully accomplished this feat does not appear difficult of execution, it is, we should fancy, by no means an easy matter, requiring great skill and precision, an immense amount of practice, together with that invaluable property, which, if applied with patience, is said to be highly efficacious in cases of gout.

When the first man, who succeeded in taking two rings only, had finished his course he retired to the centre, and a lance was handed to the second, who imitated the example of his "forerunner," but with better success. This done, they both galloped once round, and made their exit by the same way as they had come.

Another party, this time to the number of four, appeared in the arena, and went through the same performance with more or less skill.

When these too had departed, another company of three came, and acted in a precisely similar manner, all commencing by galloping round three times, each riding at the ring separately, and then after making another tour bareheaded as before, vanishing at the gate. Some were evidently old hands, carrying away three, four, and sometimes even five rings; others, on the contrary, most likely beginners, taking only one or two, a few even "going out with a duck's egg," as we say at cricket when a fellow gets no runs, and returning to the starting point empty-handed, and looking very sheepish and dissatisfied.

Many made a bungle of it, and either poked the arm itself on one side, or merely knocked the ring, causing the same to drop on the ground, and an oath to drop from the equestrian's lips, if he happened to have that weakness. At such times round went the post, and *voilà*, another ring. Others again, going at an easy canter, pierced their rings, to use schoolboy phraseology, "as clean as a whistle," to the unqualified approbation of certain among the spectators, who, had it been otherwise, would probably have had to hand over a given number of francs in hard cash to some other parties present, equally interested.

Of course a great deal depended on the mode of holding the lance. Properly, it should be retained by means of the thumb and first and second fingers only; something as one would a pen when in the act of searching for something in an almanack pasted on the wall. Those whom I observed holding it thus generally met with better success, and came in for a greater amount of applause. Some, for want of knowing better, awkwardly encircled two fingers round it, or grasped it with the whole hand, and instead of carrying it at a level with the eye, held it lower down, almost at arm's length, with the point considerably above the butt end.

Two among the competitors were *gauché* (left-handed), which the attentive

lookers-on did not fail to observe on both occasions as they each rode past. It was highly amusing, when the interest had become general, to watch the animated rows of eyes and mouths, the individual property of the spectators, as, with fixed attention, they scrutinized the bearings and every action of the candidates as they cantered round; and to hear them count with marked anxiety the progressive number of rings, as each was secured.

A gentleman received his lance with a graceful bow, and commenced the circle. Every eye turned round in its socket; he neared the post; the first ring disappeared,—every mouth opened.—“Un,” grunted the spectators. Another ring went,—“Deux!” repeated every tongue. Another seemed on the point of sliding down the lance; “Tr—r—r—non, il est tombé,” as it fell to the ground. “Ah! voila, trois,” “Eh bien c’est tout,” the remaining attempts proving unsuccessful. Some one else appears; “Un” again began the lookers-on *en masse* with indefatigable perseverance. “De—d—deux,” “Tr—trois,” “Qu—quatre,” “Cin—nq,” “Si—i—non! perdu,” “Eh bien, mais il paraît bien difficile d’enprendre six, par exemple.”

These *viva voce* enumerations were repeated time after time, each time, in fact, that a competitor of promising appearance came forward. Once or twice it was “Un,” “Deux,” &c., up to cinq, when a hissing noise, the precursor of six, commenced to die away uncompleted in a whisper, giving place to “Comment encore le nombre sixième perdu; comme c’est curieux ça!”

At this juncture in the proceedings each and every one suddenly discovered that his neighbour was counting the number of rings aloud, actually; this must not be; so when afterwards candidates appeared and commenced running, a universal hush—sh—sh—sh, resembling sausages being fried, quite as obnoxious as the number itself, and far less intelligible, took its place, to the manifest detriment of the running equestrian, who, each time he neared a post displayed such a degree of nervousness as to cause his hand to shake like an aspen leaf. This, however (the noise, not the nervous affection), gradually went off, to rise again suddenly at intervals, and the state of affairs improved.

Each was cheered voiciferously as his list rose to four, and five. Six was a poser, and seemed beyond the reach of all; no one could get it.

Three was about the average number. A duck’s egg was disheartening. One was a consolation only. Two was “*deux seulement*.” Three was “*passable*.” Four, “*bien fait*.” Five, “*par excellence*.” Six,—out of reach.

To any one fond of horses the spectacle was a particularly interesting one. There were horses of all breeds, sizes, gaits, and tempers. Some were most beautiful creatures, and looked splendid as they galloped by, their glossy, well-kept coats showing to perfection in the bright afternoon sun. If one breed predominated over another, it seemed to lie with the hunters, of which there were a great many. Now and then one might see a race-horse, perhaps, and here and there a few carriage horses, but they were very few. Ponies not unfrequently lent their aid in the contest. Some of them, however, being inconveniently small, the posts had to be lowered, to put their riders on an equal footing with the rest. We noticed that in most instances the heaviest-looking animals enabled their riders to take most rings, while those, on the contrary, that were rather frisky, and rushed round the course at

too great speed—and there were several that did—gave their unhappy riders but a small chance of success.

Twelve times, or more, parties of three, four, and sometimes five, came on trial, and it was not till past seven o'clock that all had made their several attempts. Even then the sports had not come to an end. The "tied" competitors had to try again, they also in their turn tying more, and again the capabilities of each had to be determined. Those who had made the highest number in their respective companies, meanwhile stood aloof and watched with anxiety the results of the further trials. Some of these having been "tied" too, were obliged to go in for a second attempt like the rest. Among them was one who when the turn for his second trial came appeared to unite all his skill in the final attempt, and eventually succeeded, by dint of great care, and precision, in piercing all the rings, to wit, six, to the great delight of the spectators, who clapped him, or rather their hands—fortunately for him—tremendously. The hero himself looked not a little pleased, and appeared to be very well satisfied with himself during the continuance of the proceedings.

After a time, nearly all the owners of the small numbers found themselves tied by some or other of those running again, in an apparently inextricable confusion and entanglement; and again they had each to put their hand to the lance, the lance to their eye, and their patience in their pockets, and try and try again with the assiduity of a baffled spider, until, after a series of trials that really were very trying, and seemed interminable, the long list of competitors gradually dwindled down to two. "Only two now," we thought to ourself. "That begins to look like leaving off." But curiously enough these perverse two proved the most obstinate of the whole lot.

If the first got nothing, the second was not a whit more successful. Did one cause the rings to disappear rapidly, the other poked them through by wholesale. Any one would have thought it was a preconcerted scheme, had it not been for the anxious, piqued countenance of one of them, which quite relieved one of any such idea.

Everything has its ending, as impatient people are apt to be told, and this occasion proved no exception to the rule. One of the twain, by dint of perseverance almost superhuman, succeeded at last in beating his rival by three rings, and was declared victor, *nem con.*

It now became manifest to all that the prizes were about to be awarded. Men, enveloped in the everlasting blue blouse of which *La France* seems to be so fond, appeared on the scene, laden with various articles wrapped in paper. One of them, a fine strongly-built fellow, carried into the arena, a horse, that, on being set on its feet, remained perfectly motionless. On its back, which was somewhat narrow, rested a saddle and bridle, and a set of carriage harness. (It may be as well perhaps to mention by way of elucidation that the horse was rather small, and of wooden construction). The mayor, the foremost of the judges, now stood up, and after a little preliminary muttering with the others, proclaimed that the prizes were then about to be distributed; and at the same time called over the names of those to whom laurels were due. Shortly after this the actual distribution commenced.

The first prize, which consisted of the set of carriage harness above mentioned, was given to the man who had carried off the highest number of rings in any company. We forget his name. The exultant individual who, after having been tied had succeeded in piercing six rings being passed over, as it was of course merely the result of a second trial. However, he came in for something, though not of the first quality.

Among the prizes were a couple of vases, one of which the possessor, as he galloped round (it was customary for each prize owner to gallop round with his prize in his hand), denominated "*Bismarcko*," and the other, "*Le Roi de Prusse*."

There was also a set of silver spoons, another of forks, a pink parasol, a bottle of champagne, and a dangle-legged Punchinello, which its risible owner, by means of a thread hanging below its double-sided proportions, caused to dance about, and perform funny spasmodic evolutions above his horse's ears, to the intense delight of the juveniles, and making even the stately young gentleman before noticed break into a smile.

The gentleman who had been presented with the more substantial offering of a bottle of champagne, presently called to one of the sky-blue *garçons*, for a dozen of glasses, and the refreshing *liqueur* was very speedily imbibed by his companions in the arena, with his able assistance. The reason why the prizes were not of a more superior nature was that it would have detracted too greatly from the proceeds, which were to be appropriated for the use of the poor of the village.

The prizes being now all distributed, the exceedingly interesting, though somewhat lengthy proceedings, terminated without a speech of any description being attempted, or a vote of thanks passed. A course of "proceeding" of which we highly approved, it being now half-past eight o'clock.

CHARLES A. L. E. PEGLER.

---

## AFTER LONG YEARS.

I LOVED a woman once: she was not fair,  
 But simple, loveable, and good.  
 I think she loved me too, but we  
 Swaddled our love with secrecy,  
 And ne'er used lip or speech to bring more near  
 The end which each heart would.

A tender eyelash lifted thoughtfully,  
 Or with uneasy haste let fall;  
 A smother'd trembling in a touch  
 At greeting, which scarce asked so much;  
 A painful silence, or a painless sigh,  
 Light as spring airs,—was all.

Love's bud was ripe to burst into a flower,  
With least unguarded touch of fate.  
Who sows fair joys to reap in tears?  
We were wise-headed for our years;  
And too shrewd reckoning robb'd love of its dower,  
And foresight would bid wait.

Where is that old love now? Was it so well?  
Good sooth, we never shall be wed.  
Years have made sport of each since then:  
'Twere strange chance we should meet again.  
Where is my old love now? I cannot tell;  
But know our loves are dead.

Yet even to-night—yea, often—though to think  
That I have lost her yields no pain—  
Like a half-unforgotten dream  
Across my thought, as moonbeams gleam  
O'er some unruffled lake from brink to brink,  
Floats the dead love again.

If any newer love held me in thrall  
I should not deem myself untrue.  
To meet her, and behold her changed,  
Long wed, or wither'd, or estranged,  
Would bring my heart no grief nor fret at all,  
As least frown once could do.

Yet even sometimes, thinking should I still,  
Could I but meet one once so dear,  
Feel that warm shudder in the blood,  
Find her as loveable and good,  
Or watch her eye with the old languor fill,—  
I shrink with shame and fear.

T. ASHE.





## IN AND ABOUT LOWER THAMES STREET.

**I**F Baby Thames, in his green quiet cradle in the Cotswold Hills, knew all that he would have to go through before he attained the dignity of Father Thames at London Bridge, he would surely be inclined to exclaim, with the maker of good watches and graceful verses, born on his Greenwich bank,—

“I still will be a boy.”

What a scavenger, what a coalheaver, he has to become, when he leaves the pure air of his native hills, and descends into the plain. In the lowlands he may find fields white unto the harvest, or golden grain falling before the sickle as well as bending beneath the warm August breeze, although the corn he tripped past higher up still rustled green. Bigger sheep than those which dipped their noses in his fountain may be mirrored in his maturer flow. He wanders through a pleasant country of softly-rounded chalk down, green hills crowned and mantled with darker foliage, lush, king-cupped meadow, and rich arable. His tributaries as they musically mingle with him murmur reminiscences of similar itineraries. His breast is brooched with emerald aits, and made gay with the silver, golden, and white enamel “charms” of floating swans and water-lilies. His fringing trees weave chenille catkins and floss-silk palm-buds for his decoration, stroke his face lovingly with their taper finger-tips, and dishevel their tresses over him with wanton wiling. He ripples through reeds and rushes, gurgles round the piers of picturesque old bridges of warped wood, cracked stone, and brick whose mortar-lines are hidden with moss; and ever and anon, lest too much tranquillity should grow wearisome, he has to take a spirit-stirring leap adown a flashing, lashing weir. Summer-flies and boats as slimly built skim over him in merry zig-zags. He glides past white glistening villas in trim grounds that look like slightly magnified dolls’ houses imported from Fairyland instead of Germany, and dozing red brick mansions, mellow and time-crustled like old port, and fully conscious of their local dignity even in their dreams, with ivy twining round their lichened mullions, cedars solemnly shading their sunny lawns, and “bloody warriors,” intoxicated with their own fragrance, keeping staggering sentry on the dwarf mossy walls that protect their terraced gardens from his tide. He passes lonely farmhouses with patches of green velvet on their rippled tiles, brown damp blotches on the peeling white plaster of their walls, and arabesques of grey and orange, as complicated as frostwork, on the slabs of the cow-sheds which the tar-brush has long forgotten to touch. He passes farmyards in which the corn-ricks stand in the shimmering light like humming-tops asleep; and cats, basking in the snuggest corners of the sliced hay-stacks, which look and smell as rich as cut plum-cake, gaze down in winking scorn upon the possessed porkers rushing and routing in the deep straw like a shoal of porpoises playing leapfrog in a sunny sea. He passes mouldering maltings whose weather-board extinguishers look old enough to have swung sleepily over barley sprouting for the brewage of monastic beer.

On both his banks rise hoary, ivy-mantled church-towers, here above country High-streets comatose, save on Sundays and market-days, all the week long, and there over still more slumberous villages whose green grey-stoned graves nestle around the church like children sound asleep, and whose cottages, half-buried in due season with pear, apple, and cherry-blossom, cling to the graveyard's skirts like children dropping off to sleep. He sweeps past venerable College and palatial Castle. Silently he hurries on to become the chief glory of the Great City. It seems at first a pleasant course, a grand career; but, natheless, you cannot help fancying that Father Thames must feel like a lawyer who, in spite of natural love of ease and hatred of the slightest stain of "dirty work," has been led to aim at the Lord Chancellorship. He remembers how cruelly soon he was put to work at barge-bearing and mill-turning, and how much of that work he has had to do. He remembers how vilely some of the prettiest places he passed polluted him. He knows that there is more work, more filth, in store for him. Black almost as a nigger, he flows past London, and with far more than a nigger's patience he bends his back to bear its burdens.

However, he can console himself with the thought that there could not have been a London without that ever-beginning existence of his in the Cotswold Hills. Riverside London is often rough and squalid enough, but the roughness and the squalor are redeemed by its *reality*. Beside the Thames you grasp London's *raison d'être*—by no means so readily realisable in "genteel suburbs" of villas detached and semi-detached, and smoky wildernesses of black-jaundiced and yellow-jaundiced streets and courts jammed grimy back to back and featureless face to face. To such districts population seems to have swarmed by an inscrutable dispensation of Providence. The shops and "publics" seem card-houses that a flip of the finger would send down. Their supply, of course, is propped by the surrounding demand; but why is there a demand there? The connection of the part with the mighty whole of London is not palpable, and people appear to have congregated in certain spots of Middlesex and Surrey, just as they might have done in the American backwoods or the Australian bush, for the mere purpose of keeping one another from tumbling by standing shoulder to shoulder. A new baker's shop is opened, because a new row of houses has been built; but where do the new tenants get their money from to pay the new baker's bills with? They in their turn live out of the neighbourhood, and, however freely its money may circulate, the stream cannot be plentiful enough to satisfy its needs without being fed from some source outside the neighbourhood. Directly or indirectly, the Thames is that mysterious feeder, and hence springs the feeling of satisfaction, the sense of having got hold of first-hand fact, one experiences in riverside London.

In the lower part of the London street to which the Thames has given its name pregnant symbols of the river's importance are crowded into narrow space. The Custom House and Billingsgate Market stand cheek by jowl, and over the way rises the Coal Exchange. Congested traffic chokes the narrow thoroughfare in the morning market time. The passenger on London Bridge looks down into a deep ravine whose dammed torrent tosses and

brawls and foams and bubbles, and yet seems powerless to force an outlet; a chaos of railway-vans, market-carts, "costers' shallows," and hand-barrows, locked in apparently inextricable confusion. High up in their pulpit-like perches, the drivers of the railway-vans, like other preachers, take unfair advantage of the congregation at their feet, and blatantly consign to blazes all who dispute their dignity or refuse to go exactly as *they* order them. The preachers, however, are not allowed to have it all their own way. Abuse is still *communis lingua* in Billingsgate. Fish-porters and fish-fags are formidable rivals in an amœboean contest of uncomplimentary rhetoric. Costermongers, too, are not proverbial for the soft answer that turneth away wrath; and—lathy and tallow-faced as they look, in their greasy blue guernseys, corduroys fish-scaled like mermen's extremities, napless caps, and many-creased cravats—as tall, but not quite so spotless, as an old-fashioned parson's—rising, like a flood of dirty water, around the lean necks that support their pale, pimpled, whiskerless cheeks,—costermongers are very handy with their fists, and, socially, care nothing for a black eye or bloody nose, save as a reflection on their boxing prowess; and, therefore, the carmen have to be careful not to lash them too fiercely with the tongue, and still more to keep the whipcord off them. In the morning Lower Thames-street is not the most eligible place for a lounge, unless the lounge be so peculiarly constituted as to like having his toes turned every moment into weighing-machines by portly personages with ponderous loads, the bony parts of his frame crushed in like a smashed basket, the fleshy portions of his frame kneaded like a batch of bread, and his black broadcloth smeared with slimy traces that will give it the look of a *Mont Noir* ascended by a multitudinous and audaciously aspiring Alpine Club of snails. Even as high as London Bridge, Lower Thames-street in the morning spits its viscous spume. Fat fish-wives, puffing like apoplectic prize-pigs, and red-faced as the deepest-hued peony, lean costermongers, palely perspiring, struggle up the steps that lead from it with their boxes and baskets of shelled and finny spoil. They dash them down on the pavement, they rest them on the parapets, they lug them into waiting carts and barrows, they anoint with them the shoulders of the passers-by. A scent as of a tidal river at low water, with chemical works upon its banks, salutes the nose. You fear to think of the kippered salmon, the smoked haddock, or the Yarmouth bloater you have just had for breakfast, and hurry past the opening whence that too potent fishy fragrance—not disguised, but only made more disgusting by the rank tobacco-smoke issuing from the black pipebowls of the fish-bearers—gushes like sulphuretted hydrogen from a solfatara.

Later in the day, however, you may take a not unpleasantly quaint ramble in Lower Thames-street and its purlieus. Fish still scents the air, but only sufficiently to make the odour not disagreeably characteristic of the place. Business is still being carried on, but after the morning bustle and turmoil the trade and traffic seem almost as calm as a country town's—unless when a steamer has just landed its living load at London Bridge wharf, and passengers and porters stream out in the shade of the fine old black-bloomed, tree-fringed church hard by, and the cabmen, a minute before slumbering with their toes on their splash-boards and their noses on their knees, spring

excitedly to their feet, waving their whips as if fares could be caught like trout, lifting their crooked forefingers, and exclaiming in chorus that runs croaking down the rank, "Keb, sir, keb? Here yer are, sir!" Still quieter are the approaches to the street. If you go down the bridge-steps, you seem to have dropped as through a trap from tumult into stagnation. You meet one person heavily dragging his feet up the steps; on a landing a ragged, cowering tramp is dozing; at the bottom of the steps the street seller of fruit and ginger-beer plies her knitting-needles as self-absorbedly as if she were sitting at a cottage-door with lime trees rustling, instead of London traffic rumbling, overhead. On Sunday mornings and evenings, when crowds are pouring into or out of the Weigh-house Chapel, the liveliness of Fish-street-hill contrasts oddly with the silence and solitude of some of the streets in the neighbourhood, in whose dim cavernous old churches, in which the organ's moaning sounds "melancholy as subterranean winds," congregations not much more numerous than Swift's "dearly beloved Roger" assemble; but on week-days it is like being shunted from a main-line with five-minute trains on to a grassy, rusty-railed siding behind a shed in which engines are laid up in ordinary, to turn out of thronged Gracechurch-street into the street as mute comparatively as the fish from which it takes its name—while Monument-yard, surrounded by its dusky quiet old houses, and lighthoused with its hoary column, gleams hushed as a land-locked, moonlit, ship-deserted little bay, no longer in need of a Pharos.

Still quieter are the quaintly-named narrow lanes that lead down from Eastcheap and Tower-street to Lower Thames-street, and interlace between, in tortuous warp and woof, Pudding-lane, Beer-lane, Water-lane, Harp-lane, Love-lane, Idol-lane, Cross-lane, Botolph-lane, St. Mary-at-hill, St. Dunstan's-alley, and such like. Peace broods in St. Dunstan's green churchyard, chequered by the shade of its old trees, thickly studded with grey gravestones, and raised high above your head by the dust of scores of generations. The peace is not broken, but made more strangely rural by the chirpings of countless sparrows, and the cooing of the flocks of pigeons that sun themselves on the church's roof and tower and pinnacles, and their wing-clapping as they circle round it in fitful flight, flecking the sky's smoky blue with snowy white. There was once a rookery in St. Dunstan's churchyard, and a house hard by was obliged to supply it yearly with three pounds' worth of twigs to enable the clerical birds to build their nests at their stately leisure.

The greater part of the church is modern now, but standing by it, you can read English history and legend in epitome. Beneath it are buried traces of old Roman London. Its patron saint's name carries one's thoughts back to King Arthur's mysterious sleep in Avalon; to Joseph of Arimathea's rooted staff blossoming when other thorns were only white with snow; to the saint's harp (is this the name-giver to Harp-lane?) that breathed weird melody, untouched by human fingers; to the forge in which he nipped the Devil by the nose; to Edwy and Elgiva. Gower's Lord Cobham gave a south aisle, and porch, and buttresses to old St. Dunstan's-in-the-East. An uncle of Francis Bacon was married in it, and it held a monument of Queen Elizabeth's Sir John Hawkins. *He* was buried in the sea on which he had fitly

died; but a later English sailor, the Lawson who fell off Lowestoff, and of whom frequent mention is made by Pepys, was laid in the old church not long before it was burned down. In it had preached witty Fuller of the *Worthies*. Just three doors off the old church of St. Dunstan-in-the-West the Great Fire stopped, but it destroyed the entire parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East. The tall, lead-covered steeple, that had been a Cockney's landmark, sweated blood, and toppled into the flames leaping around it like famine-maddened wolves: a shell of black and calcined outer wall was all that was left of the old church. Wren used as much as he could of it when he built its successor, and his tower, with its four-pronged spire, still stands—in spite of the seeming flimsiness of its superstructure, weathered the hurricane that damaged every other London church tower in the beginning of last century—but all the rest of his church had to be rebuilt in the second decade of the present century. However, London smoke and rain have relieved its fair proportions of all modern rawness—it stands on the old site, has copied the old east window, and seems thoroughly impregnated with the old spirit of the place. In perfect harmony with its memorials of old English heroes is the modern monument it holds, erected to the memory of the first English victim of the Indian mutiny.

If St. Dunstan's rooks have vanished from the neighbouring labyrinth of lanes, parsonically-attired waiters from Tower-street taverns still wing their way, like prophet-feeding ravens, into that lonely wilderness, bearing, for the refecton of old clerks in crepuscular back offices, snowy-clothed trays laden with viands, in tin covers that look like battered pork-pie hats, and foaming pots of beer. Those cauliflower-heads increase the liquor-longing of the parched wayfarer; and in the quietest corners of these everywhere almost-noiseless thoroughfares there are most private little "publics" that seem expressly made for thirsty souls too modest or too moral to dive into crowded bars: snug little bars, with unslopped metal counters gleaming like silver, and engine-handles as white as an old maid's just-washed best china, that it would be a shame to suffer to continue customless; and behind those bars comfortable-looking middle-aged human she-spiders, or, peradventure, pretty young spideresses, that wake up from their naps and resume their netting as the bashfully arid human bluebottle buzzes by, and invite him with irresistible smiles of welcome to walk into their parlours, or, at any rate, to do a little Cooper out of those mirror-like pewters, standing. Not only the back offices in which the old clerks take their dinner, but the front offices also, and most of the other business houses in these lanes, seem strangely quiet in the middle of the business day, in the core of a great city. As to the fruit and fish salesmen, a considerable percentage of them seem to have knocked off before noon, and their half-shuttered warehouses are dark and desolate, and litter-strewn, as suburban cemetery catacombs left with the door ajar. In Pudding-lane, however, you encounter Indian files of porters trotting along with paunchy orange-boxes, white oblong fish coffins, and buoy-like hampers on their backs, or sauntering down to the wharfs again, with only the strain of their "knots" upon their brows—the queer head-gear looking like crownless sou-westers, or collars through which they are prepared to grin, clown-like,



for a consideration. Pudding-lane ought rather to be called Dessert-lane. There is a fruity fragrance in the air. Whiffs of Spain, Portugal, and the Azores, issue from the dim warehouses in which "the fair Hesperian fruit" is stored. Fruits of all kinds, too, enter an appearance in Pudding-lane, and run round the corner to vie, on a smaller scale, with the omnipresent fish of Thames-street. Interspersed with bottles of lime-juice and "Sublime Salad Oil," canned pine-apples from Boston, and patent pine-apples from the West Indies; pomegranates and grenadines; plump green melons, whose gores are as symmetrically expanded as a balloon's, and little melons not bigger than a cricket-ball, wrinkled like a monkey's face and speckled like a bird's breast; waxily red tomatoes; curved, blackened clusters of bananas, that look like hands severed from decaying corpses; grapes, green and golden, black and purple; glowing oranges, pale lemons, bloated "forbidden fruit;" cocoa nuts, Brazil nuts, Barcelona nuts, and Kentish filberts; fresh figs that cool the very eye; peaches, and all their sunnily downy congeners; the bloomy family of plums in all its hues; the whole tribe of apples, some of them packed in cotton wool, from which their hectic cheeks flush out like cosseted consumption patients'; butterily sweet pears of many a clan; cherries, according to the season, packed tight like pins in boxes as delicately laced as a toilette-cushion, or heaped high in sprawling pyramids, etc., etc., make Lower Thames-street an agreeable cornucopia. Its traffic is not all caused by fish and fruit. The swing doors of the Coal Exchange are smudged by the grimy paws of collier skippers. Gloomy business men of all kinds slip into the grim portal of the gloomy Custom House opposite, like young dragons seeking shelter in the maw of their dreary dam. The cranes of the high warehouses beyond are slowly hoisting or lowering wool bales and crates like small sheep-folds to and from their upper stories; by the light of lanterns dangling from huge cross beams you can dimly discover white-bloused men hauling about boxes and barrels and firkins on the lower floors. Now a van rattles by, with rosy Dutch cheeses, like babies' heads, rolling to and fro in it, as if it were hurrying away with proofs of a Massacre of Innocents for Herod's satisfaction. Anon a slate-coloured store-waggon lumbers past Towerwards, with a Military Train man in blue and white for postilion, a mounted comrade bringing up the rear, and a Guards sergeant, with a face as red as his tunic, lolling and nodding on the box-seat. But fish and fruit are the *spécialités* of Lower Thames-street, and the former especially asserts itself with indomitable emphasis. The fish market proper now is bare; its slabs have been sluiced down, and its damp pavement is being cleansed of its dank refuse by scavengers in splashed white stockings and unlaced highlows, who propel their brushes with their breasts, as if they were shrimping-nets. But in the low stalls that give upon the market, and make a little warren at its side, and in the unglazed stores of the dealers in Thames-street, although waggon-loads have been scattered over London since the morning, there is still fish galore, both fresh and dried. Great turbot's tied neck and tail as if to prevent them from springing back into the wells of the smacks huddled at the wharf; clumsy goggle-eyed cod glaring, like John Willett, in heavy anger at long rows of bottles that hold the oil into which their livers have been boiled

down, and in heavy envy at silver-scaled, aristocratically graceful salmon that have distanced them even in size; red kippered salmon and amber-hued smoked haddocks; Yarmouth bloaters, red herrings, fresh herrings, herrings in boxes, and herrings in barrels; black eels writhing snakelike; fiercely-whiskered prawns, mountains and plains of pink shrimps and of brown shrimps; dark, muddily-mottled, unboiled lobsters, and boiled lobsters that blaze in scarlet; crayfish that make one think of fleas seen through the microscope; hammer-crabs that look big enough to be ridden on; whelks, periwinkles, and purple mussels, still fringed with green and olive seaweeds, heaped high in hogsheads and washing-tubs; oysters as big as saucers, and as rough as rocks, shot out from sacks like coals, smooth, flat, thin natives arranged in tanks as carefully as tessellated pavement, oysters in tubs, oysters in kegs, and oysters in plates on rude luncheon-bars in which are stuck the waiting openers' knives quivering like murderous daggers. The wanderer through such a wilderness of shell and scale is apt to dream at night that he is fleeing through coral-groves, hotly hunted by a pack of dogfish, or a chorus of merboys, shrilly shouting in Submarine, "Please to remember the grotto—it's only once a year!" A little hunting he experiences by day—especially if he is a fussy old gentleman, bent on selecting the fish for his dinner with his own gold spectacles. Fish-dealers then deafen him with invitations to buy, and bag-sellers buzz around him like a swarm of angry flies. Such knowing old gentlemen are fond of boasting of the bargains they get at Billingsgate, but from the nature of the glances which follow them when they trot off with their purchases—feeling their coat-tails every second to make sure that their pockets have not been picked by the surrounding roughs—I am inclined to think that their belief in the cheapness of fish personally bought at Billingsgate is a "fond imagination."

For fresh air as well as fresh fish people find their way to Lower Thames-street. On the terrace in front of the Custom House there may always be found, besides the local loafers, persons of all ages and both sexes walking up and down, apparently under an impression that they are at the seaside. Backwards and forwards they patrol, just as if they were on a pier or a parade. The muddy water splashing on the stairs is to them as ocean breaking on a pebbly strand. The black lighters with white diamonds on their bows are anchored mackarel-boats to these dreamy personages; they seem inclined to hire the dim wherries that rock on the tide, and go out to enjoy "the bracing breath of brine" on waves as dark and thick as blacking. The rotten straw in the river seems seaweed to them. The grimy, sullen Custom House—which looks doubly sulkily on those who come upon it from behind, as if angry at their knowing that though its face is columned stone, its back is mere flat brick—is Kemp Town to these imaginative loungers, and the smoky warehouses on the Surrey side are their mist-veiled coast of France. The flocks of tame pigeons that light at their feet, and almost flap against their faces, stand, I suppose, for sea-gulls. Their Bazaar is the wall that flanks the east stairs, on which some local artist has drawn in colours a horse, a lady in Bloomer costume, and an acrobat performing with his infant son:

works of art at which the visitors to Shrimpington-super-Tamesim gaze with critical persistency.

After all, however, the riverscape from the Custom House is, in its way, as well worth looking at as any seascape; and the taste of elbow room beside the Thames that may there be got intensifies one's regret at the thought that the *completion* of the Embankment works will apparently take place in a late year of next century.

RICHARD ROWE.

## THE MAGIC FLOWER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DR. AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

### PART I.

**A**LTHOUGH the Innominato was habitually grave and reserved in his demeanour, he would occasionally converse in a free and humorous manner with strangers. With the young he would not unfrequently be even jocose, though he still uniformly insisted on the respect due to his age and his high reputation. Of the few amusements he allowed himself—unless in his case study might be called an amusement—his favourite one was the superintendence of a small but exquisitely-arranged flower-garden. In this he took great interest, rewarding with no niggard hand those who could procure for him any flower of more than ordinary beauty. On a fine spring morning he might be seen watching for hours the operations of his gardeners, giving them advice, and encouraging them to care and exertion in placing in the most favourable positions those of Donna Natura's jewels (as he used to call the more beautiful of his flowers) which particularly required light and warmth.

One fine morning in the month of May, his servants having gone to their usual meal, the Innominato imagined himself quite alone in his garden. On raising his eyes from a flower he had been examining, he perceived a peasant girl of great beauty standing before him, apparently wishing to speak to him, and yet too timid to advance. For some moments the Innominato said nothing, so completely was he absorbed in the contemplation of her beauty. Nor was he without good excuse. It would have been difficult, indeed, to find a more perfect model of that style of beauty held in so much estimation by Luini, Leonardo da Vinci, and others of that school. Although not more than seventeen years of age, her figure was almost womanly, yet tempered by the easy grace and flexibility of girlhood. Her features were beautifully moulded, and had that expression of intelligence and amiability, which doubtless originally induced the artists of the Lombard school to choose from these peasant girls the types of their female saints. Her feet, on which she wore a kind of sandals still in use among the female peasantry in Lombardy, were small, and exquisitely formed, and her hands, though somewhat browned by the sun, matched her feet in their perfection of modelling. Her eyes were deep blue, and well placed in her head; her brow was clear, her complexion fair, and her hair of that lovely golden hue

which is so often seen in the works of artists of the period, and which was then held in such high estimation. Her dress alone distinguished her from the peasantry of the neighbourhood. Although made in the same fashion as that generally in use among them, it was of a finer quality, and evidently fitted better, showing either that the wearer or her parents were somewhat above the common grade, possibly the daughter of some small farmer in easy circumstances.

As soon as the Innominato had somewhat recovered from his surprise, he said to the girl, who was now examining attentively a small basket she held in her hand,—

"Are you looking for any one, my pretty lass? All my men have left the garden, but they will soon be back."

"It was your Excellency alone that I wished to speak to, if I might be so bold," she replied, as she timidly raised her eyes from the basket.

"By all means, if you wish it. In what way can I serve you?" inquired the Innominato.

The girl made no answer, but cast her eyes on the ground, evidently lacking sufficient courage to explain the object of her visit.

"If you do not tell me what you want, I can do nothing for you," continued the Innominato. "It is impossible for me to guess your meaning. But take heart, and let me know your errand."

"I am almost ashamed to tell your Excellency," said the girl, blushing; "but everybody says you are so kind, that I thought"—and here again she relapsed into silence.

"Ah, I understand something about it now," said the astrologer. "It is a little love affair you wish to speak of, is it not?"

The girl remained silent, but the expression of her countenance clearly told the Innominato that he had guessed rightly.

"I think I see what it is," he continued; "you have had a quarrel with your lover, and you wish me to assist you in making it up with him again."

"Your Excellency is partly right," said the girl. "But I have not quarrelled with him, and, although he is not allowed to speak to me, I am sure he loves me still."

"That I think extremely likely," said the Innominato, after looking at her intently for a moment. "At least he must have a very bad taste if he does not. But what has occurred to cause a separation between you?"

"His father's interference."

"And what is the father's reason?" inquired the Innominato.

"He says that I am not his son's equal," replied the girl.

"Who is his father?"

"The Count Miniscalchi of Pavia."

"Well," said the Innominato, "that is very awkward. The Count is proud as well as wealthy, and doubtless he wishes his son to marry some one in his own rank. Has Count Miniscalchi ever seen you?"

"Never, so far as I know, your Excellency. Somebody told him that his son had fallen in love with me, and wished to make me his wife. When the Count found out that I was only a poor peasant girl, he flew into a

passon, and told his son that, if he did not promise never to speak to me again, he would request the Duke to imprison or banish him."

"And how did you get acquainted with the son?" inquired the Innominato.

"I had taken some silk which I had made to market at Como. The Contino Edgardo saw me there, and followed me home to my mother's house."

"In spite of all your entreaties that he would not do so?" said the Innominato, smiling.

At this the girl hung her head, but said nothing.

"You live with your mother then," continued the Innominato. "Have you no father?"

"I have no father, your Excellency. He was killed in the wars when I was quite a child, and I have remained ever since with my mother, who has a small silk farm in the valley about two miles from Camerlato."

"Have you brothers or sisters?"

"No, your Excellency; I am an only child."

"And what is your name?"

"Carlotta Zampi."

"Who advised you to apply to me?" asked the Innominato, after a short pause.

"No one, your Excellency," replied the girl. "I had so often heard of your great wisdom and generosity, that I determined if possible to apply to you, before telling any one else my secret. Yesterday I found that my uncle had some business to do in the village below, and I asked him to let me ride behind him on his mule, and the weather being so beautiful, he consented. I have left him, promising to return in an hour's time. He thinks I am merely wandering about for my amusement."

"Well now, tell me what you wish me to do for you," said the Innominato.

"To-morrow a tournament is to be held in the great square at Como," said Carlotta, "in which the Contino is to take a part. I thought that perhaps, with your aid, if he saw me, he might love me again, notwithstanding his father's threat. If he marries the young Marchioness they have engaged him to, I am sure it will break my heart"—and here poor Carlotta burst into tears.

"Well, well," he said, "don't cry, and I will see what can be done. I do not like to interfere in matters of the kind, still I cannot refuse to help a good and pretty girl in distress. Take that," he continued, as he plucked a beautiful white flower from a plant which stood near him, and which he had been examining before his eyes first fell on Carlotta, probably a camellia japonica, which by some chance had been thus early brought from the East into Italy through Venice. "Take this flower with you, and all will yet end happily."

"But what am I to do with it?" said Carlotta, much pleased with its beauty.

"Anything you please."



"But should I wear it to-morrow?" she inquired.

"Once more, do what you please with it," he replied. "Only take it carefully home. Now go, or your uncle will think you are lost."

Carlotta again attempted to obtain from the *Innominato* further instructions about the flower, but he would give her none. Finding he was inflexible, she placed the flower carefully in her basket, and, after thanking the astrologer for his kindness, and wishing him good-morning, she quitted the garden and descended the hill to find her uncle.

Carlotta's mother was superior to the peasantry in general, as far as worldly circumstances were concerned. She occupied (as has been already stated) a small silk farm of her own, which she and her daughter cultivated, with the occasional assistance of one or more of her neighbours. They had, moreover, two cows, some goats, and a very well-stocked poultry-yard. Their cottage was also better than habitations of the kind are generally, being solidly built of stone, and having four good well-furnished rooms in it. Still Carlotta and her mother were but peasants after all, and the Count Miniscalchi was one of the richest and proudest nobles in the land. Though by no means of a bad disposition, he was exceedingly ambitious, and was ever thinking in what way he could advance the honour of his family.

The Count was a widower, and, although he was in the prime of life, and a remarkably handsome man, he would enter into no matrimonial alliance. His whole thoughts were absorbed on advancing the prospects of his only son, Edgardo. Among other projects, that of forming for him an advantageous matrimonial alliance held a high place. In this he was the more interested, as Edgardo was his only relative, and in case of his death without children, the family would become extinct. At last the Count, without consulting his son, succeeded in making what he considered a suitable match for him. And he had evidently chosen with great judgment, for the young lady herself was not only very beautiful and intelligent, but of a lineage as honourable and as wealthy as that of the Count himself. She was the daughter of the late Marquis of Caranzi, who had possessed large estates near Lodi, and which by his will he had left conjointly to his wife and daughter. The widowed Marchioness had, in her youth, been a great beauty, and was still a very handsome woman, though of course somewhat matronly in appearance. Her daughter Erminia was handsome in face and gracefully formed, but her features bore an expression of pride and harshness which went far to spoil the impression they might otherwise have produced. And the expression of her face was not altogether an untruthful one. She had little on the score of amiability to recommend her; and it was more than suspected that she was in love with the son of the Marquis Andreozzi of Vercelli, a very handsome young soldier, who, by a singular coincidence, had been chosen to be Edgardo's opponent in the tournament which was to be held at Como the day after Carlotta's visit to the *Innominato*. Whether she really loved young Andreozzi she herself only knew. Certainly he had made her an offer of marriage, which would as certainly have been accepted by the mother had not the Count Miniscalchi come forward as a suitor for

Erminia's hand for his son, and, being the richer of the two, he was accepted by the mother. Count Andreozzi, when he heard of this, was highly incensed, but he had too much good breeding to allow it to be seen. He appeared to treat the matter with the greatest indifference, but he nourished the most deadly animosity towards young Miniscalchi, and resolved, at all hazards, that he would have Erminia for his wife.

The Count Miniscalchi, after the Marchioness had given her consent to her daughter's marriage with Edgardo, called his son before him, and with an air of great pride and satisfaction, informed him of the fortunate alliance which had been arranged. His astonishment and indignation were very great when Edgardo refused to accept it; and these were still further increased when he heard that his son was on the very point of applying to him for permission to marry a common peasant. In vain did the father storm and threaten his son with every kind of vengeance if he dared to disobey him. In vain did he promise to obtain an order from the Duke for his incarceration in the Castle of Monza—notorious as containing the most horrible dungeon in Europe. Edgardo still positively refused to marry Erminia; and all the satisfaction the Count could obtain from his son, was that he would neither pursue his intentions with respect to Carlotta, nor speak to her again, without his father's permission.

The reader may, therefore, imagine how difficult was the mission of reconciling all these conflicting interests which the Innominato had placed upon the delicate white flower which lay concealed in Carlotta's basket.

We must now return to Carlotta, who found her uncle waiting for her in a state of great anxiety.

"You silly girl," he said, "where have you been? I was beginning to be dreadfully frightened about you, and was afraid you had either lost yourself, or had fallen into some gully. I am very angry with you, I can tell you."

"I am sorry for that, uncle," she replied. "I found myself in a garden where there were such beautiful flowers that I did not like to leave it."

"Whose garden could that be? I did not know there was any garden in the neighbourhood, except that belonging to the Innominato; and I should be sorry to find that you had been there."

"Why so?" inquired Carlotta.

"Because he is believed to have dealings with the Evil One. It is true I never heard of any harm having been done by him to any one, though at the same time it is better to avoid all such people, lest we should get into mischief through them. But now, as it is getting late, we must start at once, else it will be dark before we reach home, and your poor mother will be in a state of great anxiety about you, I am sure."

The mule was now saddled and brought to the door of the little inn, and Carlotta and her uncle (the former still holding the basket carefully on her arm) having seated themselves, they proceeded gently on their homeward road. For some time little conversation passed between them. The girl was silent and abstracted; and although her uncle tried several times to get information from her respecting her interview with the Innominato (with whom he found she had been in conversation), he did not succeed, obtaining

only the most evasive answers. That Carlotta's mind was occupied with the subject of her interview with the Innominato was proved by the extreme care she took of the flower in her basket, and her alarm lest it might receive any injury. More than once a slight misunderstanding arose between her and her uncle about the pace of the mule—he wishing to hurry onwards rapidly, so that they might reach home before nightfall, while Carlotta, fearing that the quickened pace of the beast might shake or injure the flower in her basket, begged of him, without telling her true reason, to keep on at a walking pace. In vain the worthy man impressed upon her the necessity there was for their hurrying onwards. Carlotta would not listen to reason, and her uncle—with whom she was a great favourite—allowed her to have her own way.

It was dark before they arrived at Carlotta's home, as the uncle predicted. They found her mother in great anxiety. Her joy at her daughter's appearance, however, quickly dispelled the little cloud which had gathered on her brow, and they were soon seated at the supper-table. The conversation turned principally upon the tournament which was to take place the next day at Como; the necessity for their arriving at the city at an early hour, so as to obtain good places; what costumes the mother and daughter should wear; and what preparations they should make, so as to arrive with as little fatigue as possible. At last it was agreed that Carlotta and her mother should leave home immediately after breakfast, and proceed onwards towards Como, and that the uncle, who resided at some little distance from them, should overtake them on their way, and, seating Carlotta *en croupe* behind him on his mule, should conduct her into the town. Having taken seats for himself and his niece, he would resign his own as soon as the mother arrived, in case they could not find places for all three.

Supper over, Carlotta pleaded fatigue, and retired to her bedroom. Once in it, and the door carefully fastened, she took the flower from her basket. After examining it, and finding that it was still perfectly fresh and uninjured, she placed it in a little mug of water beneath the picture of the Virgin, before which she lighted a small lamp. She then offered up a fervent prayer to the Madonna to bless the flower, that through its aid she might be able to effect a reconciliation with her lover.

Having finished her prayer, Carlotta threw herself on her bed, but not to sleep. Her mind was too much occupied with the flower to permit that. She was constantly engaged in endeavouring to devise how it would restore to her the affections of Edgardo. She continued to reflect in what way she should use it, and she could not help feeling somewhat angry with the Innominato for having refused to give her any explicit instructions on that point. It was evidently necessary that she should wear it on the morrow. To leave it at home she felt would simply be to lose the benefit which might be derived from it. But how should she wear it so that it might be seen to the greatest advantage? This point occupied her mind for a considerable time. At last she resolved to wear it in her hair, as it would thus be more likely to attract her lover's attention; and it is possible that at the same time the idea did not escape her that he could not then gaze at the flower without

looking on her own lovely face. Hour after hour passed away in this manner; in fact the dawn was breaking before she had arranged all her plans. Then sleep came to her relief.

After a few hours' rest Carlotta rose, and began to make arrangements for setting out. Her mother had already risen, and had not only prepared the morning meal, but milked the cows, and completed her other domestic duties before Carlotta had left her room. The mother was first ready to leave the house, and, indeed, had been waiting nearly half an hour before Carlotta made her appearance. If the good woman felt some little impatience at the delay, it vanished as soon as she saw Carlotta, so beautiful did she look. She had arrayed herself in her best. Her costume was in excellent taste, but she wore no ornament beyond a neat gold cross which hung suspended from her neck by a black ribbon, and in her hair the camellia, which looked as fresh as at the moment when the *Innominato* had plucked it from its stalk. After her mother had looked at her for some moments, full of pride and admiration, she said,—

"How did you obtain that beautiful flower, Carlotta? I never saw one like it before."

"It was given me yesterday, mother," said Carlotta, "and I brought it home with me in my basket."

"How I should like to obtain the plant that bears such flowers," said her mother. "What is the name of it, dear?"

"Really I don't know," said Carlotta. "But perhaps I shall manage to obtain a plant for you some day, when my uncle goes back to the village we were at yesterday. Now, let us fasten the door, and start on our road. We ought to be at Como early, to get good places."

"Yes, let us start immediately," said her mother, "or we shall miss your uncle, and he will be at Como before us. What a fortunate thing it is that the day is so fine! I suppose we shall meet a great number of people on the road."

Of the people they might meet on the road, or of the many thousands they would see, Carlotta thought very little. Her mind was occupied with one person only, and apart from him the tournament, with all its gaiety, would be to her little better than solitude. Having closed the door securely behind them, the two now left the house. As soon as they were in the high road, they found that they had not started by any means too early. Many people were already on their way to the tournament, dressed in their best, and on the tiptoe of expectation. Much to Carlotta's annoyance, she was obliged to enter into conversation with many of their neighbours. She did all she could do with civility to avoid them, but her mother, who, of course, did not understand Carlotta's position, chatted to her gossips with great volubility, much to her daughter's annoyance. Fortunately, however, she at last perceived her uncle coming up one of the bye-roads on his mule. Fearing that he might pass them without speaking, she called to him, and, as soon as he recognised her voice, he made towards them.

"Sister," he said, "I am surprised that you can allow Carlotta to trudge along on foot in that manner. Before you get to Como she will certainly be

covered with dust. Let her get up behind me, and we will go on together; and, after I have put up the mule (as I told you yesterday evening), I will secure good places, where we will remain until you arrive, and then you can seat yourself beside us."

"Thank you, brother," said the mother; "that is very kind. If I had known it would have been so dusty, I should have asked you to take Carlotta with you all the way."

Carlotta having been assisted to her seat on the mule, her uncle started off, her mother promising to meet them at the tournament.

"Who gave you that beautiful flower?" said her uncle, who had noticed it whilst she was standing beside her mother. "I never saw one of the kind before."

"The old gentleman gave it to me yesterday, whilst you were waiting."

"You don't mean the Innominate?"

"Yes, I do," said Carlotta. "And a very kind old gentleman he is."

"If he has any more of those flowers, I wish he would give me one of them," said the uncle. "I should like to have a tree of them."

"But did you not tell me that it was wrong to have anything to say to him, uncle?" said Carlotta, laughing. "I am sure you would not like to take such a gift from his hands."

"Well, to speak the truth, I don't know that it would be altogether right," said her uncle. "But, at the same time, it would be a great temptation. I venture to say there will not be another lady at the tournament with a flower like that, and they will all be envying you."

"That I care very little about," said Carlotta. "But please try and keep the mule at a steady pace, or the flower may fall out of my hair."

"But why then did you not fasten it more securely?" asked her uncle. "I half suspect, now, that you think it probable you may have to take it out, and give it to somebody."

Carlotta gave no answer to this, and continued silent and thoughtful till they arrived at the gates of Como. Here all was bustle and confusion. The crowd was very great, and horses, mules, and carriages were jumbled together with hundreds of foot passengers, all eagerly striving to gain an entrance. Everybody was in good humour, and the little annoyances they were subjected to caused much joking and hearty laughter. Once inside the gate, the crowd somewhat opened up, and all then went forward smoothly enough. Carlotta, owing to her great beauty, was well known by reputation to many, and was the object of special admiration, her uncle receiving many compliments on her appearance.

"My dear," said one matron, who was trudging along with three rather ungainly daughters, "your mother ought to be a happy woman."

"Why do you think so?" asked Carlotta.

"To have a daughter who can marry any one she chooses. Why, a man has only to look at you, to fall in love with you."

So many were the compliments Carlotta received, that at last she began to believe that the flower in her hair might have a magic power to attract attention, and that its influence was possibly increased in intensity the



nearer that she approached the spot appropriated for the tournament. She was soon confirmed in this, for the further she went the stronger and more frequent appeared to be the admiring glances which were cast upon her. She now began to feel certain that the Contino's attention would be drawn to her, and that, in spite of his father's prohibition, he would speak to her, and all would end well. Probably her having arrived at this conclusion tended to increase her beauty, as it added considerable gaiety to her features, which well became them.

Carlotta and her uncle at last reached the inn, which was situated near the lists, where the mule was to be left till they should return home in the evening. In the yard of the inn the compliments paid to Carlotta, even by strangers, exceeded what had been said about her in the street, strengthening her very much in her conclusion that the flower's power to attract attention was gradually increasing, and that before the day was over her lover would succumb to its influence.

So great was the crowd which had gathered round her that it was with some difficulty Carlotta and her uncle contrived to leave the inn yard. Indeed it required energetic remonstrance, both on the part of her uncle and the landlord of the Falcone (for that was the name of the inn), before they could manage to depart. At length, however, they contrived to arrive at the enclosure set apart for the lists, and with some difficulty they managed to enter. To their great satisfaction, they obtained two excellent front seats, which, though at some distance from the part marked out for the Duke and his court, were so near the entrance to the lists that the Contino must of necessity pass near the spot where Carlotta was seated, and thus come within the influence of the magic flower in her hair.

(To be continued.)



## THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

## PART III.—HIS MANHOOD.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ANDREW AT LAST.

FALCONER lived on and laboured on in London. Wherever he found a man fitted for the work, he placed him in such office as De Fleuri already occupied. At the same time he went more into society, and gained the friendship of many influential people. Besides the use he made of this to carry out plans for individual rescue, it enabled him to bestir himself for the first and chief good which he believed it was in the power of the government to effect for the class amongst which he laboured. As I have said, he did not believe in any real inward good being effected except through individual contact—through faith, in a word—faith in the human helper thus made a stepping-stone through the chaotic misery around them towards faith in the Lord and in his Father. All that association could do as such was only, in his judgment, to remove obstructions from the way of individual growth and education—to put better conditions within their reach—first of all, to see that the people should be able, if they would, to live decently. He had no notion of domestic inspection, or of offering prizes for cleanliness and order. He knew that misery and wretchedness are the right and best condition of those who live so that misery and wretchedness are the natural consequences of their life. But there ought always to be the possibility of emerging from these; and as things were, over the whole country, he saw that it was impossible for many, who would if they could, to breathe fresh air, to be clean, to live like human beings. And he saw this difficulty constantly increasing, through the rapacity of the holders of small house property, and the utter wickedness of railway companies, who pulled down every house that stood in their way, and did nothing to provide room for those who were thus ejected—most probably from a wretched place, but only to be driven into a more wretched still. To provide suitable dwellings for the poor he considered the most pressing of all necessary reforms. His own fortune was not sufficient for doing much in this way, but he set about doing what he could by purchasing houses in which the poor lived, and putting them into the hands of persons whom he could trust, and who were immediately responsible to him for their proceedings, who should make them fit for human abodes, and let those who would, have better accommodation so long as they paid their reasonable rent, which he considered far more necessary for them to do than for him to have done. I cannot set this forth, or many things besides, as I gladly would. When this history comes before my readers in a less necessarily compressed form, many parts that are only sketched here I hope to be able to fill up.

One day he met by appointment the owner of a small block of houses, of which he contemplated the purchase. They were in a dreadfully dilapidated condition, shameful with a shame that belonged more to the owner than the inhabitants. The man wanted to sell the houses, or at least was willing to do so; but put an exorbitant price upon them. Falconer expostulated.

"I know the whole of the rent these houses could bring you in," he said, "without making any deduction for vacancies and defalcations. What you ask is twice as much as they would fetch in the market."

The poor wretch looked up at him with the leer of a ghoul. He was dressed like a broken-down clergyman, in rusty black, and a neckcloth of whitey-brown.

"I admit it," he said in good English, and a rather educated tone. "Your arguments are indisputable. But such are my losses—so far short does the yield come of the amount on paper, that it would be hardly worth my while to keep them. It's the funerals, sir, that pay me. I'm an undertaker, as you may judge from my costume. I count back-rent in the burying. People may cheat their landlord, but they can't cheat the undertaker. They *must* be buried. That's the one indispensable—ain't it, sir?"

Falconer had let him run on that he might have the measure of him. Now he was prepared with his reply.

"You've told me your profession," he said. "I'll tell you mine. I'm a lawyer. If you don't let me have these houses, every one of them, for five hundred, which is the full market value of them, I'll prosecute you. It'll take a good penny from the profits of your coffins to put those houses in a state to satisfy the inspector."

The wretched creature was struck dumb. Falconer resumed.

"You're the sort of man that ought to be kept to your pound of filthy flesh. I know what I say; and I'll do it. The law costs me nothing. You won't find it so."

The undertaker sold the houses, and no longer in that quarter killed the people he wanted to bury.

I give this as a specimen of the kind of thing Falconer did. But he took none of the business part on his own hands, on the same principle on which Paul the Apostle said it was unmeet for him to leave the preaching of the word in order to serve tables—not that the thing was beneath him, but that it was not his work so long as he could be doing more important service still.

De Fleuri was one of his chief supports. The whole nature of the man mellowed under the sun of Falconer, and over the work that Falconer gave him to do. His daughter recovered, and devoted herself to the same labour that had rescued her. Miss St. John was her *superior*. By degrees, without any laws or regulations, a little company was gathered, not of ladies and gentlemen, but of men and women, who aided each other, and without once meeting as a whole, laboured not the less as one body in the work of the Lord, bound in one by bonds that had nothing to do with cobweb committee meetings or public dinners, chairmen or wine-flushed subscriptions. They worked like the leaven of which the Lord spoke.

But De Fleuri, like every one else in the community, I believe, had his own private schemes subserving the general good. He knew the best men of his own class and his own trade, and with them his superior intellectual gifts gave him influence. To them he told the story of Falconer's behaviour to him, and of Falconer's own need, and hungry-hearted search. A kind of enthusiasm of help seized upon these men. To help your superior is such an exciting gladness! Was anything of this in St. Paul's mind when he spoke of our being fellow-workers with God? I only put the question. Each one of these had his own trustworthy acquaintances, or neighbours, rather—for like finds out like all the world through, as well as over—and to them he told the story of Falconer and his father, so that through all that region of London by degrees it was known that the man who loved the poor was himself needy, and looked to the poor for their help. Without them he could not be made perfect.

Some of my readers may be inclined to say that it was dishonourable in Falconer to have occasioned the publishing of his father's disgrace. Such may recall to their minds that concealment is no law of the universe; that, on the contrary, the Lord of the Universe said once: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." Was the disgrace of Andrew Falconer greater because a thousand men knew it, instead of forty, who could not help knowing it? Hope lies in light and knowledge. Andrew would be none the worse that honest men knew of his vice: they would be the first to honour him if he should overcome it. If he would not—the disgrace was just, and would fall upon his son only in sorrow, not in dishonour. The grace of God—the making of humanity by his beautiful hand—no, heart—is such, that disgrace clings to no man after repentance, any more than the feet defiled with the mud of the world come yet defiled from the bath. Even the things that proceed out of the man, and do terribly defile him, can be cast off like the whiteness of the leper by a grace that goes deeper than they; and the man who says, "I have sinned: I will sin no more," is even by the voice of his brothers crowned as a conqueror, and by their hearts loved as one who has suffered and overcome. Blessing on the God-born human heart! Let the hounds of God, not of Satan, loose upon sin; let them hunt it to the earth; let them drag forth the demoniac to the feet of the Man who loved the people while he let the devil take their swine; and do not talk about disgrace from a thing being known, when the disgrace is that the thing should exist.

One evening Falconer had saved a woman from committing suicide by throwing herself from Westminster Bridge—the new bridge then in the process of building. I doubt if he would have felt justified in doing so if he had not been prepared to do more for her. Suicides were a class most tenderly regarded by Falconer. He knew as well as any one the reported nature of suicide in France: he believed that an Englishman or Englishwoman must be miserable indeed before that could become the last resort. Loving life greatly, he thought how awfully wretched the poor soul must have been that could throw itself into the filthy Thames. Whether or not it were the duty of the magistrate to treat it as a crime, he felt that it was not for him

to do so. He would woo such back to life, he would be mediator between them and the life they had fallen out with, taking it for an enemy, with all the tenderness that lay in his big heart, with the true humanity which yet shall be lord of all—nay, which even now possesses, and ever and always did possess, the earth. This was about twelve o'clock at night. He had just taken the girl home—her story I have no time to tell here; perhaps I shall hereafter—when he met a man he did not know, who touched his hat and said,

"I'm thinkin', sir, ye'll be sair wantit at hame the nicht. Ye wad be better to gang at ance, an' lat the puir fowk luik efter themsels for ae night."

"I'm sorry I dinna ken ye, man. Do ye ken me?"

"Fine that, Mr. Falconer. There's mony ane kens you and praises God."

"God be praised!" returned Falconer. "Why am I wanted at home?"

"'Deed I wad rather not say, sir. Hey!"

This last exclamation was addressed to a passing cab.

"Ye had better gang into her an' awa' hame."

Without further parley, Robert jumped into the cab, and told the man to drive, or if he could not make haste, to stop the first cab that could. The man did drive, for his horse was able and willing. When he entered John Street, he saw nothing unusual at first, but gradually discovered before he reached his own door that there were a good many men about in little quiet groups—some twenty or so, here and there. When he let himself in with his pass-key, there were two men in the entry. He passed them without speaking, and ran up to his own chambers. He saw nobody more till he got into his sitting-room. There stood De Fleuri and another man. De Fleuri simply waved his hand towards the old sofa. On it lay an elderly man, with his eyes half open—a look almost of idiocy upon his pale, puffed face, which was damp and shining. His breathing was laboured, but there was no further sign of suffering. He lay perfectly still. Falconer saw at once that he was under the influence of some narcotic, probably opium; and the same moment the all but conviction darted into his mind that Andrew Falconer, his grandmother's son, lay there before him. That he was his own father he had no feeling yet. He turned to De Fleuri and his companion.

"Thank you, friends," he said. "I shall find time to thank you."

"Are we right?" asked De Fleuri.

"I don't know. I think so," answered Falconer; and without another word the two men withdrew.

His first mood was very strange. It seemed as if all the romance had at once deserted his life, and it lay bare and hopeless. He felt nothing. No tears rose to the brim of their bottomless wells—the only wells that have no bottom, for they go into the depths of the infinite soul. He sat down in his chair, stunned as to the heart and all the finer chords of his nature. The man on the horsehair sofa lay breathing—that was all. The gray hair about the pale ill-shaven face glimmered like a cloud before him. What should he do or say when he awaked? How approach this far-estranged soul? How ever send the cry of *father* into that fog-filled world? Could he ever have climbed on those knees and kissed those lips, in the far-off days when



the sun and the wind of that northern atmosphere made his childhood blessed beyond dreams? The actual—that is the present phase of the ever-changing actual, and, in this case, a very awful phase of it—looked the ideal in the face; and the mirror that held them both shook and quivered at the discord of the faces reflected in it. A kind of moral cold seemed to radiate from the object before him, and chill him to the very bones. This could not long be endured. He fled from the actual to the source of all the ideal—to that Saviour who, the infinite mediator, mediates between all hopes and all positions; between the most debased actual and the loftiest ideal; between the little scoffer of St. Giles's and his angel that ever beholds the face of the Father in heaven. He fell on his knees, and spoke to God, saying that this was not as he had made this man, but that he had made this man; that the mark of his fingers was on the man's soul somewhere; and praying for the divine presence of the making Spirit to cause the man to come to his right mind, giving him once more the heart of a child, to begin him yet again at the beginning, when, as he grew, all the evil he had done and suffered would come in to swell the fountain of his gratitude to him who had delivered him from himself and his own deeds, and made him over again. Something of this Falconer breathed out before the God of his life, and rose refreshed and strengthened to meet the debased soul which yet he had to honour, when it should at length look forth from the dull smeared windows of those ill-used eyes.

He rose and felt his pulse. There was no danger from the narcotic. The coma would pass away. Meantime he would get him to bed, and he began to undress him with a new feeling of reverence, that soon overcame all his disgust at the state in which he found him. At length one sad little fact about his clothing, which revealed the poverty-stricken attempt of a man to preserve some show of decency, called back the waters of the far-ebbed ocean of feeling. At the prick of a pin the heart's blood will flow: at the sight of—a pin it was—Robert burst into tears, and wept like a child; the deadly cold was banished from his heart, and he not only loved, but knew that he loved—felt the love that was there. Everything then about the worn body and shabby garments of the man smote upon the heart of his son, and through his very poverty he was more sacred in his eyes. The human heart awakened the filial—reversing thus the ordinary process of Nature, who by means of the filial, when her plans are unbroken, awakes the human. He soon had him safe in bed, unconscious of the helping hands that had been busy about him in his heedless sleep; unconscious of the radiant planet of love that had been folding him round in its atmosphere of affection. What if he should not be the man after all?—if this wealth had been spent mistakenly, and did not belong to him? Still he was a man, and the love Robert had given he was not the one to withdraw. The man who had been for a moment as his father he could not cease to regard with human devotion. At least he was a man with a divine soul. He might at least be somebody's father. Where love had found a moment's rest for the sole of its foot there it must remain.

When he had got him thus safe in bed, he sat down beside him to think

what he would do. His sleep would not be over yet, and gave him leisure to think. He could not determine for some time—not even how to find out if he was indeed his father. If he approached the subject without guile, he might be fearful and cunning—might have reasons for being so, and concealing the fact. This was the first thing to make sure of, for, if it was he, all the hold he had upon him lay in knowing it. He could not think. He had had little sleep the night before. He must not sleep this night. He dragged his bath into his sitting-room, and refreshed his faculties with plenty of cold water, then lighted his pipe and went on thinking—not without prayer to that Power whose candle is the understanding of man. All at once he saw how to begin. He went again into the chamber, and knew by his skill that a waking of some sort was at hand. Then he went to a corner of his room, and from beneath the table drew out a long box, and from the box lifted Dooble Sandy's auld wife, tuned the somewhat neglected strings—for he had not much time for the violin now—and laid it on the table. Keeping constant watch over the sleeping man, and judging that his soul had come near enough to the surface of the ocean of sleep to communicate with the outer world through that bubble his body, which had floated upon it all the night unconscious, he put his chair just outside the chamber door, which opened from his sitting room, and began to play gently, softly, far away. For a while he extemporized only, thinking of Rothieden, and the grandmother, and the bleach-green, and the hills, and the waste old factory, and his mother's portrait and letters. As he dreamed on his dream got louder, and, he hoped, waked a more and more vivid dream in the mind of the sleeping man. "For who can tell," thought Falconer, "what mysterious sympathies of blood and childhood's experiences there may be between me and that man?—such, it may be, that my utterance on the violin will wake in his soul the very visions of which my soul is full while I play, each with its own nebulous atmosphere of dream-light around it." For music wakes its own feeling, and feeling wakes thought, or rather, when perfected blossoms into thought, thought radiant of music as those lilies that shine phosphorescent in the July nights. He played more and more forcefully, growing in hope. But he had been led astray in some measure by the fulness of his expectation. Strange to tell, doctor as he was, he had forgotten one important factor in his calculation: how the man would awake from his artificial sleep. He had not reckoned of how the limbeck of his brain would be left discoloured with vile deposit, when the fumes of the narcotic had settled and given up its central spaces to the faintness of desertion.

Robert was very keen of hearing. Indeed he possessed all his senses keener than any other man I have known. He heard him toss on his bed. Then he broke into a growl, and damned the miauling, which, he said, the strings could never have learned anywhere but in a cat's belly. But Robert was used to bad language; and there are some bad things, which seeing that there they are, it is of the greatest consequence to get used to. It gave him, no doubt, a great pang of disappointment to hear such an echo to his music from the soul which he had hoped especially fitted to respond in harmonious unison with the wail of his violin. But not for even this moment did he lose his

presence of mind. He instantly moderated the tone of the instrument, and gradually drew the sound away once more into the distance of hearing. But he did not therefore let it die away. Through various changes it floated in the thin æther of the soul, changes delicate as when the wind leaves the harp of the reeds by a river's brink, and falls a ringing at the heather bell, or playing with the dry silvery pods of honesty that hang in the poor man's garden, till at length it drew nearer, bearing on its wings the wail of red Flodden, *The Flowers of the Forest*. Listening through the melody for sounds of a far different kind, Robert was aware that those sounds had ceased; the growling was still; he heard no more turnings to and fro. How it was operating he could not tell, further than that there must be some measure of soothing in its influence. He ceased quite, and listened again. For a few moments there was no sound. Then he heard the half articulate murmuring of one whose organs sleep has all but overcome with its beneficent paralysis, but whose feeble will would compel them to utterance. He was nearly asleep again. Was it a fact or a fancy of Robert's eager heart? Did the man really say:

"Play that again, father. It's bonnie, that! I aye likit the *Floowers o' the Forest*. Play awa'. I hae had a frichtsme dream. I thocht I was in the ill place. I doobt I'm no weel. But yer fiddle aye did me gude. Play awa', father."

All the night through, till the dawn of the gray morning, Falconer watched the sleeping man, all but certain that he was indeed his father. Eternities of thought passed through his mind as he watched—this time by the couch, as he hoped, of a new birth. He was about to see what could be done by one man, strengthened by all the aids that love and devotion could give, for the redemption of his fellow. As through the darkness and fog of a November night in London, the light of a pure heaven made its slow, irresistible way, his hope grew that athwart the fog of an evil life, the darkness that might be felt, the light of the Spirit of God would yet penetrate the heart of the sinner, and shake the wickedness out of it. Deeper and yet deeper grew his compassion and his sympathy, in prospect of the tortures the man must go through, before the will that he had sunk into a deeper sleep than any into which opium could sink his bodily being, would shake off its deathly lethargy, and arise, torn with struggling pain, to behold the light of a new spiritual morning. All that man could do he was prepared to do, as far as he knew it, regardless of entreaty, regardless of torture, anger, and hate, with the inexorable justice of love, the law that will not, must not, dares not yield—strong with an awful tenderness, a wisdom that cannot be turned aside, to redeem the lost soul of his father. And he strengthened his heart for the conflict by saying that if he would do thus for his father, what would not God do for his child? Had he not proved already, if there was any truth in the grand story of the world's redemption through that obedience unto the death, that his devotion was entire, and would leave nothing undone that could be done to lift this sheep out of the pit into whose darkness and filth he had fallen out of the sweet Sabbath of the universe?

He removed all his clothes, searched the pockets, found in them one poor

shilling and a few coppers, a black *catty* pipe, a box of snuff, a screw of pig-tail, a knife with a buckhorn handle and one broken blade, and a pawn-ticket for a keyed flute, on the proceeds of which he was now sleeping—a sleep how dearly purchased, when he might have had it free, as the gift of God's gentle darkness! Then he destroyed the garments, committing them to the fire as the hoped farewell to the state of which they were the symbols and signs.

He found himself perplexed, however, by the absence of some of the usual symptoms of the habit, and by the sleep being so prolonged, and latterly so natural. He concluded that the wretched man was in the habit of using both stimulants and narcotics, and that the one interfered with the action of the other.

He called his housekeeper. She did not know whom her master supposed his guest to be, and regarded him only as one of the many objects of his kindness. He told her to get some tea ready, as their patient, for such he considered him, would most likely awake with a headache. He instructed her to go to him, and wait upon him as if it was a matter of course, and explain nothing to him. He himself must pass for the doctor, as indeed he was; and if he should be at all troublesome, he would be with her at once. She must keep the room rather dark, that he might not be too much bewildered all at once. He would have his own breakfast now; and if the patient remained quiet under her care, he would try to get a little sleep on the sofa.

He woke murmuring, evidently suffering from headache and nausea. Mrs. Ashton took him some tea. He refused it with an oath—more of suffering than ill-nature, and was too unwell to show any curiosity about the person who had offered it. Probably he was accustomed to so many changes of abode, and to so many bewilderments of the brain, that he did not care to inquire where he was or who waited upon him. Happily for the heart's desire of Falconer, the debauchery of his father had at length reached one of many crises. He had caught cold before De Fleuri and his comrades found him. Now he was ill—feverish and oppressed. Falconer presented himself as a medical man; and through the whole of the following week they nursed and waited upon him without his asking a single question as to where he was or who they were. During all this time Falconer saw no one but De Fleuri and the many poor fellows who called to inquire after him and the result of their supposed success. He never left the house, but either watched by the bedside, or waited in the next room. Often would the poor patient get out of his bed, driven by the longing for drink or for opium gnawing him through all the hallucinations of delirium; but he was weak, and therefore manageable, and retreated to bed again at the will of his nurse or doctor. If in any lucid moments he thought where he was, he no doubt supposed that he was in a hospital, and probably had sense enough to understand that it was of no use to attempt to get his own way there. He was soon much worn, and his limbs trembled greatly. It was absolutely necessary to give him stimulants, or he would have died, but Robert reduced them gradually as he recovered strength. He believed that the descending gradua-

tion could be best effected in his present condition through the stimulants alone, and that it would not be necessary to use opium at all.

But although this was the thing to be first effected, there was an infinite work to be done beyond this. To keep him from such things, even till the craving was gone, would be but the capturing of the merest outwork of the enemy's castle. He must be made such that, even if the longing should return with tenfold force, and all the means for its gratification should lie within the reach of his outstretched hand, he would not touch them to save his life. But God was able even to do that for him. He would do all that he knew how to do, and God would not fail of his part. Even this labour of his was all God's doing. For this he had raised him up; to this he had called him; for this work he had educated him—made him a physician, given him money, time, the love and aid of his fellows, and, beyond all, a rich energy of hope in his heart and of faith in the Father, making him bold to attempt whatever came to his hand to do.

Space and time would, under present circumstances, fail me to tell how as he grew better the longing of his mind after former excitement roused and kept alive the longing of his body. He soon began to see that he was not in a hospital. I do not know what form of reasoning he went through concerning the matter; but at last he seemed, irresolute as he was both from character and illness, to have made up his mind to demand his liberty. He sat in a warm dressing-gown by the fire one afternoon, as the shades of the November evening were thickening the air. He had just had one of his frequent meals, and was gazing, as he often did, into the glowing coals. His son had come in, and after a little talk sat silent for a moment at the opposite corner of the fire.

"Doctor," said Andrew, seizing the opportunity, "you've been very kind to me, and I don't know how to thank you, but it is time I was going. I am quite well enough now. Would you kindly order the nurse to bring me my clothes to-morrow morning, and I will go."

"No, no," said Robert, "you are not fit to go yet. Make yourself comfortable, my dear sir. There is no reason why you should go."

"I don't understand it. I want to go."

"It would ruin my character as a professional man to let a patient in your condition go out of the house in this weather. I cannot consent."

"Where am I? I don't understand it."

"You are in a friend's house."

"I have no friends."

"You have one, at least, who puts his house here at your service."

"There's something about it I don't like. Do you suppose I am incapable of taking care of myself?"

"I do indeed."

"Then you are quite mistaken," said Andrew, angrily. "I am quite well enough to go, and have a right to judge for myself. It is very kind of you, but I am in a free country, I believe."

"No doubt. All honest men are free in this country. But——"

He saw that his father winced. He said no more. Andrew resumed, after a pause in which he had been rousing his feeble anger.



"I tell you I will not be treated like a child. I demand my clothes and my liberty."

"Do you know where you were found that night you were brought here?"

"No. But what has that to do with it? I was ill, as you know as well as I."

"You are ill now because you were lying then on the wet ground under a railway-arch—utterly incapable from the effects of opium, or drink, or both. You would have been taken to the police-station, and would probably have been dead by this time, if you had not been brought here."

He was silent for some time. Then he broke out :

"I tell you I *will* go. I do not choose to live on charity. I will *not*. I demand my clothes."

"I tell you it is of no use. When you are well enough to go out you shall go, but not now."

"Where am I? Who are you?"

He looked at Robert with a keen, furtive glance, in which was mingled bewilderment and suspicion.

"I am your best friend at present."

He started up—fiercely but for feebleness.

"You do not mean that I am in a madhouse, and you are my keeper?"

Robert did not reply. He left him to suppose what he pleased. Andrew took it for granted that he was in a private madhouse, and grew quiet as a lamb. But it was easy to see that he was only thinking and contriving how to escape. This mental occupation, however, was excellent for his recovery; and his son did not let him suppose that he suspected it; nor were many precautions necessary, seeing that he never left the house without having De Fleuri there, who was a man of determination, nerve, and wiry strength. As he grew better, the stimulants given him in the form of medicine were, as I have said, gradually dropped. In their place were substituted tonics and other restoratives, which from their effect on the nerves of the stomach prevented him from missing them so much, and at length got his system into a more healthy condition, though at his age, and after so long indulgence, it could not be expected that he would quite recover for years. Robert did all he could to provide him with healthy amusement—played backgammon, draughts, and cribbage with him, brought him Sir Walter's and other novels to read, and often played on his violin, to which he listened with great delight. At times of depression, which of course were frequent, *The Flowers of the Forest* made the old man weep. Falconer put yet more soul into the sounds than he had ever done before. He tried to make the old man talk of his childhood, asking him about the place of his birth, the kind of country, how he had been brought up, his family, and all that. His answers were vague, and often contradictory. Indeed, the moment the subject was approached, he looked suspicious and cunning. He said his name was John Mackinnon; and as yet, although Robert's belief was strengthened by a hundred little circumstances, he had received no proof that he was Andrew Falconer. Remembering the pawn-ticket, he found out from him that he could play on the flute, and brought him a beautiful instrument, the sight of which made

the old man's eyes sparkle. He took it and put it to his lips with trembling hands, blew a few notes, burst into the tears of weakness, and laid it down. But he soon took it up again, and evidently found both pleasure and sadness in the tones and the memories they awakened. At length Robert brought a tailor, and had him dressed like a gentleman—a change which pleased him much. He then took him out for a drive, and his health returned more rapidly after this. He ate better, and grew more lively, and began to tell tales of his adventures, of the truth of which Robert was not always certain, but never showed any doubt. Some of his stories he did believe more readily from the fact that he suddenly stopped in them, as if they were leading him into regions of confession which must be avoided, resuming with matter that showed a marked difference from what had gone before. At length he took him out walking, and he comported himself with perfect propriety.

But one day as they were going along a quiet street, Robert met an acquaintance, and stopped to speak with him. After a few moments' chat, he turned, and found that his father had vanished. A glance at the other side of the street showed the probable refuge—a public-house. Robert darted in, and found him there, with a glass of neat whisky in his hand, trembling now more with eagerness than from weakness. He struck it from his hold. But he had already swallowed one glass, and he turned upon his keeper in a rage. He was a tall and naturally powerful man—almost as strongly built as his son, with long arms like his, which were dangerous even now, in such a moment of factitious strength and real excitement. Robert could not lift his hand to defend himself from his father, although, had he judged it necessary, I believe he would not, in such a cause, have hesitated to knock him down, as he had often done to others whom he would rather a thousand times have borne on his shoulders. He received his father's blow on the cheek. For one moment it made him dizzy, for it was well delivered. But when the bar-keeper jumped across the counter and approached with his fist doubled, that was another matter. He measured his length the same moment on the floor, and Falconer seized his father, who was making for the door, and notwithstanding his struggles and fierce efforts to strike again, held him secure and himself scathless.

A crowd gathers in a moment in London, speeding to a fray as the vultures to carrion. On the heels of the population of the neighbouring mews came two policemen, and at the same moment out came the barman, bleeding, to the assistance of Andrew. But Falconer was as well known to the police as if he had been a ticket-of-leave man, and a good deal better.

"Call a four-wheel cab," he said to one of them. "I'm all right."

The man started at once. Falconer turned to the other.

"Tell that fellow in the apron," he said, "that I'll make him all due reparation. But he oughtn't to be in such a hurry to meddle. He gave me no time but to strike hard."

"Yes, sir," answered the policeman. The rest thought he must be a great man amongst the detectives; but the bar-keeper vowed he would "summons" him for the assault.

"You may, if you like," said Falconer. "When I think of it, you shall do so. You know where I live?" he said, turning to the policeman.

"No sir, I don't. I only know you well enough."

"Put your hand in my coat-pocket then, and you'll find a card-case. The other. There! Help yourself."

He said this with his arms round Andrew's, who had ceased to cry out when he saw the police.

"Do you mean to give this gentleman in charge, sir?"

"No. It is a little private affair of my own, this."

"Hadn't you better let him go, sir, and we'll find him for you when you want him?"

"No. He may give me in charge if he likes. Or if you should want him, you will find him at my house."

Then pinioning his prisoner still more tightly in his arms, he leaned forward, and whispered in his ear,

"Will you go home quietly, or give me in charge? There is no other way, Andrew Falconer."

He ceased struggling. Through all the flush of the contest his face grew pale. His arms dropped by his side. Robert let him go, and he stood there without offering to move. The cab came up; the policeman got out; Andrew stepped in of his own accord, and Robert followed.

"You see it's all right," he said to the policeman. "Here, give the barman a sovereign. If he wants more, let me know. He deserved all he got, yet I was hasty. John Street, number —."

His father did not speak a word, or ask a question on his way home. Evidently he considered it safer to obey in silence. But the drink he had taken, though not nearly enough to intoxicate him, was far more than enough to bring back the old longing with redoubled force. He paced about the room the rest of the day like a wild beast in a cage, and in the middle of the night, got up and dressed and tried to creep through the room in which Robert lay. But he slept too anxiously for that. The captive did not make the slightest noise, but his very presence was enough to wake his son. He started at a bound from his couch, and his father retreated in dismay into his chamber.

At length the time arrived when Robert would make a further attempt, although with a fear and trembling to quiet which he had to seek the higher aid. His father had clearly recovered from his attempt to rush again upon destruction. He was gentler and more thoughtful, and would again sit for an hour at a time gazing into the fire. From the expression of his countenance upon such occasions, he hoped that his visions were not of the evil days, but of those of his innocence.

One evening when he was in one of these moods—he had just had his tea, the gas was lighted, and he was sitting as I have described—Robert began to play in the next room, hoping that the music would sink into his heart, and do something to prepare the way for what was to follow. Just as he had finished *The Flowers of the Forest*, his housekeeper entered Andrew's chamber, and presented a packet, which she said had been left for him. He

received it with evident surprise, mingled with some consternation, looked at the address, looked at the seal, laid it on the table, and gazed again with troubled looks into the fire. The woman retired the moment she gave it him, and Falconer had too much respect to watch him, though he would gladly have done so. He went on playing a slow, lingering voluntary, such as the wind plays, of an amber autumn evening, on the æolian harp of its pines. He played it so gently that he could himself hear if his father should speak.

For what seemed to him hours, though it was but half-an-hour, he went on playing. At length he heard a stifled sob. He rose, and peeped into the room. The gray head was bowed between the hands, and the gaunt frame was shaken with sobs. On the table lay the portraits of himself and his wife, and the faded brown letter, so many years folded in silence and darkness, the last his wife had written, lay open beside them. He had known the seal, with the bush of rushes and the Gaelic motto. He had gently torn the paper from around it, and had read the letter from the grave—no, from the land beyond, the land of light, where human love is glorified. Not then did Falconer read the sacred words of his mother; but afterwards his father put them into his hands. I will record them here.

"My beloved Andrew, I can hardly write, for I am at the point of death. I love you still—love you as dearly as before you left me. Will you ever see this? I will not send it to you. I will leave it behind me, that it may come into your hands when and how it may please God. You may be an old man before you read these words, and may have almost forgotten your young wife. Oh! if I could take your head on my bosom where it used to lie, and without saying a word, think all that I am thinking into your heart! Oh, my love, my love! will you have had enough of the world and its ways by the time this reaches you? Or will you be dead, like me, when this is found, and the eyes of your son only, my darling little Robert, read the words? O Andrew, Andrew! my heart is bleeding, not altogether for myself, not altogether for you, but both for you and for me. Shall I never, never be able to let out the sea of my love that swells till my heart is like to break with its longing after you, my own Andrew? Shall I never, never see you again? That is the terrible thought—the only thought almost that makes me shrink from dying. If I should go to sleep, as some think, and not even dream about you, as I dream and weep every night now! If I should only wake in the crowd of the resurrection, and not know where to find you! Oh, Andrew! I feel as if I should lose my reason when I think that you may be on the left hand of the judge, and I can no longer say *my love*, because you do not, cannot any more love God. I will tell you the dream I had about you last night, which I think it was that made me write this letter. I was standing in a great crowd of people, and I saw the empty graves about us on every side. We were waiting for the great white throne to appear in the clouds. And as soon as I knew that, I cried, 'Andrew, Andrew!' for I could not help it. And the people did not heed me; and I cried out and ran about, everywhere, looking for you. At last I came to a great gulf. When I looked down into it, I could see nothing but a blue deep, like the blue of

the sky, under my feet. It was not so wide but that I could see across to the other side, but it was oh! so terribly deep. All at once, as I stood trembling on the very edge, I saw you on the other side, looking towards me, and stretching out your arms as if you wanted me. You were old and much changed, but I knew you at once, and I gave a cry that I thought all the universe must have heard. You heard me. I could see that. And I was in a terrible agony to get to you. But there was no way, for if I fell into the gulf I should go down for ever, it was so deep. Something made me look away, and I saw a man coming quietly along the same side of the gulf, on the edge, towards me. And when he came nearer to me, I saw that he was dressed in a gown down to his feet, and that his feet were bare and had a hole in each of them. So I knew who it was, Andrew. And I fell down and kissed his feet, and lifted up my hands, and looked into his face—oh, such a face! And I tried to pray. But all I could say was, ‘O Lord, Andrew, Andrew!’ Then he smiled, and said, ‘Daughter, be of good cheer. Do you want to go to him?’ And I said, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then he said, ‘And so do I. Come.’ And he took my hand and led me over the edge of the precipice; and I was not afraid, and I did not sink, but walked upon the air to go to you. But when I got to you, it was too much to bear; and when I thought I had you in my arms at last, I awoke, crying as I never cried before, not even when I found that you had left me to die without you. Oh, Andrew, what if the dream should come true! But if it should not come true! I dare not think of that, Andrew. I *couldn’t* be happy in heaven without you. It may be very wicked, but I do not feel as if it were, and I can’t help it if it is. But, dear husband, come to me again. Come back, like the prodigal in the New Testament. God will forgive you everything. Don’t touch drink again, my dear love. I know it was drink that made you do as you did. *You* could never have done it. It was the drink that drove you to do it. You didn’t know what you were doing. And then you were ashamed, and thought I would be angry, and could not bear to come back to me. Ah, if you were to come in at my door, as I write, you would see whether or not I was proud to have my Andrew again. But I would not be nice for you to look at now. You used to think me pretty—you said beautiful—so long ago. But I am so thin now, and my face so white, that I almost frighten myself when I look in the glass. And before you get this I shall be all gone to dust, either lying knowing nothing about you or anything, or trying to praise God, and always forgetting where I am in my psalm, and longing for you to come. I am afraid I love you too much to be fit to go to heaven. Then, perhaps, God will send me to the other place—all for love of you, Andrew. And I do believe I should like that better. But I don’t think he will, if he is anything like the man I saw in my dream. But I am growing so faint that I can hardly write. I never felt like this before. But that dream has given me strength to die, because I hope you will come too. O my Andrew, do, do repent and turn to God, and he will forgive you. Believe in Jesus, and he will save you, and bring me to you across the deep place. But I must make haste. I can hardly see. And I must not leave this letter open for any-



body but you to read after I am dead. Good-bye, Andrew, I love you all the same. I am, my dearest Husband, your affectionate Wife,

"H. FALCONER."

Then followed the date. It was within a week of her death. The letter was feebly written, every stroke seeming more feeble by the contrasted strength of the words. When Falconer read it afterwards, in the midst of the emotions it aroused—the strange lovely feelings of such a bond between him and a beautiful ghost, far away somewhere in God's universe, who had carried him in her lost body, and nursed him at her breasts—in the midst of it all, he could not help wondering to find the forms and words so modern, so like what he would have written himself. It seemed so long ago that that faded, discoloured paper, with the gilt edges, and the pale brown ink, and folded in the large sheet, and sealed with the curious wax, must have been written; and here were its words so fresh, so new! not withered like the rose-leaves that scented the paper from the work-box where he had found it, but as fresh as if just shaken from the rose-trees of the heart's garden. It was no wonder that Andrew Falconer should be sitting with his head in his hands after reading this letter. For he had read it.

When Robert saw how he sat, he withdrew, and took his violin again, and played all the tunes of the old country that he could think of, recalling Dooble Sandy's workshop to his own mind, that he might through that recall the music he had learned there. No one who understands the bit and bridle of the association of ideas, as it is called in the skeleton language of mental philosophy, wherewith the Father-God holds fast the souls of his children—to the very last that we see of them, at least, and doubtless to endless ages beyond—will sneer at Falconer's notion of making God's violin a ministering spirit in the process of conversion. There is a well-authenticated story of a rough—a convict, I think—having been almost reformed—greatly reformed for a time—by having, in one of the colonies, gone into a church,—why, I cannot say, but the good came to him from no power of the service, that he knew at least—I confess that it may have had some unrecognized influence upon him—but that which opened the fountains of repentance was the pattern of the matting along the aisle of the church, *being the same as that of the matting in the church to which he had gone when a boy*—with his mother, I suppose. It was not the matting that converted him: it was not to the music of his violin that Falconer looked for aid, though that had a little saving power in itself more than the matting had, but to its recall of the memories of childhood, the mysteries of the kingdom of innocence, to overshadow the soul that had all but lost those instincts which

Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet the master light of all our seeing.

Not for an hour did he venture to go near him again. When he entered the room he found him sitting in the same place, no longer weeping, but gazing into the fire with a sad countenance, the expression of which showed Falconer at once that the soul had come out of its deep cave of sleep and obscurity, and had drawn nearer to the surface of life. He had not seen

him look so much like one "clothed, and in his right mind," before. He knew well that nothing could be built upon this yet; that this very emotion, whether it were of grief only, or of grief mingled with gladness, would as yet only expose him the more to the besetting sin; that in this mood he would drink, with the known danger of murdering the wife whose letter had made him weep. But it was progress, notwithstanding. He looked up at Robert, and then sank his eyes again. How he regarded him he could not himself have told—perhaps with a dim feeling as of the presence of something between an angel and a demon, even as the demoniacs regarded the Lord of Life who had come to set them free. Bewildered he must have been to find himself, towards the close of a long life of debauchery, wickedness, and the growing pains of hell, caught in a net of old times, old feelings, old truths.

Now Robert had been careful by no sign or tone that he could avoid to show himself as a Scotchman even, or as other than the professional attendant of Andrew. Nor was there the least indication in Andrew's manner of doubt attaching to the person who had the charge of him. But the only solution of the mystery that could present itself to him was that it was all the doing of his friends, probably of his son, of whom he knew absolutely nothing. His mother could not be alive still. Of his wife's relatives there had never been one who would have taken any trouble about him after her death, hardly even before it. John Lammie was the only person, except Dr. Anderson, whose former friendship he could suppose capable of this later development. If he knew that the doctor was alive, he would be certain that it was his doing. But he would be too much for him yet. He was not going to be treated like a child—and so on. Something like this passed through his mind, especially when the devil got uppermost, which he often did.

My reader must understand that Andrew had never been a man of resolution. He had been wilful and headstrong; and these qualities, in children especially, are often mistaken for resolution, and generally go under the name of strength of will. There never was a greater mistake. The mistake, indeed, is only excusable from the fact that extremes meet, and that this disposition is so opposite to the other, that it looks to the careless eye most like it. He could not resist his own impulses, or the enticements of evil companions. Kept within certain bounds for some time after he had begun to go wrong, by the neighbourhood of those whose opinion had weight upon him, if not with him, he had opportunities of rushing into all excesses when at length he went abroad upon business, which came about often enough to destroy at last almost all restraint, even at home, till at length the vessel of his fortune went all to pieces, and he was a waif on the waters of the world. But in feeling he had never been vulgar, however much so in action. There was much feeble good in him from the first, and it had in part been protected by its very feebleness. He could not sin so much against it as if it had been strong. For many years he had fits of bitter shame, and of grief without repentance; for repentance is the active, the divine part—the turning again. But taking more steadily both to strong drink and opium, the latter dulled his conscience, the former his feelings, till at the time when he was

found by De Fleuri, he was but like the dull ghost of Andrew Falconer walking in a dream of its lost carcass.

Once more Falconer retired, but not to take his violin. He could play no more. Hope and love were swelling within him. He could not rest. Was it a sign from heaven that the hour for speech had arrived? He paced up and down the room. He kneeled and prayed for guidance and help. Something within urged him to try the rusted lock of his father's heart. Without any formed resolution, without any conscious volition, he found himself again in his room. There the old man sat, with his back to the door, and his gaze fixed on the fire, which though still glowing had sunk low in the grate. Robert went round in front of him, kneeled down on the rug before him, and said the one word,

"Father!"

Andrew started, raised his hand, which trembled as with a palsy, to his head, stared almost wildly at Robert, on whose face the light shone full, and said in a trembling voice,

"Are you my son, Robert, sir?"

"I am your son. O father, I have longed for you by day, and dreamed about you by night, almost ever since I noticed that other boys had fathers, and I had none. Years and years of my life—I hardly know how many—have been spent in searching for you. And now I have found you!"

And the great tall man, in the prime of life and strength, laid his big head down on the old man's knee, as if he had been a little child. His father said nothing, but laid his hand on the head. And so for some moments the two remained, motionless and silent. Andrew was the first to speak.

"What am I to do, Robert?"

No more welcome words could he have uttered. When a man once asks what he is to do, there is hope for him. Robert answered instantly.

"You must come home to your mother," he said.

"My mother!" Andrew exclaimed. "You don't mean to say she's alive yet?"

"I heard from her yesterday—in her own hand, too," said Robert.

"I daren't. I daren't," murmured Andrew.

"You must, father," returned Robert. "It is a long way, but I will make the journey easy for you. She knows I have found you. She is waiting and longing for you. She has hardly thought of anything but you ever since she lost you. She is only waiting to see you, and then she will go home, she says."

A silence followed.

"Will she forgive me?" said Andrew.

"She loves you more than her own soul," answered Robert. "She loves you as much as I do. She loves you as God loves you."

"God can't love me," said Andrew, feebly. "He would never have left me as he has done if he had loved me."

"He has never left you from the very first. You would not take his way, father, and he just let you try your own. But he began from the first to get me ready to go after you. He put such love to you in my heart, and gave

me such teaching and training, that I have followed you like one of God's sleuth-hounds. And now I have found you, and I will hold you. You cannot escape—you will not want to escape any more, father."

Andrew did not reply to this appeal. It looked like imprisonment for life, I suppose. But thought was moving in him. After a long pause, during which his son's heart was longing for some word on which he might hang a further hope, the old man spoke again, as if he uttered his thoughts aloud.

"Where's the use? There's no forgiveness for me. My mother is going to heaven. I must go to hell. No. It's no good. Better leave it as it is. I daren't see her. It would kill me to see her."

"It will kill her not to see you; and you will have that sin more to lie on your conscience, father."

Andrew rose and walked up and down the room. Robert rose from his knees.

"And there's my mother," he said.

Andrew did not reply; but Robert saw when he turned next towards the light that the sweat was standing in beads on his forehead.

"Father," said Robert, going up to him, as with a sudden inspiration.

The old man was arrested in his walk, and turned and faced his son.

"Father," repeated Robert, "you've got to repent; and God won't let you off, and you needn't think it. You'll have to repent some day."

"In hell, Robert," said Andrew, looking him full in the eyes, as he had never looked at him before. It seemed as if the acknowledgment of even so much of the truth made him already bolder and honester.

"Yes. Either on earth or in hell. Would it not be better on earth?"

"But it will be no use in hell."

In these few words lay the germ of the preference for hell that some poor souls, enfeebled by wickedness, feel. They will not have to do anything here—only to moan and cry and suffer for ever, they think. It is effort, the out-going of the living will that they dread. The sorrow, the remorse

the repentance, they do not so much regard: it is the having to turn, be different, and do differently, that they shrink from; and they have been taught to believe that this will not be required of them there—in that awful refuge of the will-less. I do not say they think thus: I only say they are in the condition of dim feeling, which, if it grew into thought, would take this form. But if you tell them that the fire of God without and within them will compel them to bethink themselves; that the vision of an open door beyond the smoke and the flames of their torture will ever urge them to call up the ice-bound will, that it may be thawed by those very flames into obedient motion; that the torturing spirit of God in their hearts will keep their consciences ever awake, not merely telling them what they ought to have done, but what they ought to do and *must* do now, hell will not wear that aspect of attraction which it does wear to such, through all its terror, all its ghastly horror and torture. Tell them that there is *no* refuge from the compelling Love of God, until they flee to that Love for refuge—that He is in hell too, and that if they make their bed in hell they cannot escape him, and

then, perhaps, they will feel something of the true power of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched.

"Father, it *will* be of use in hell," said Robert. "God will give you no rest even there. You will have to repent some day, I do believe, if not now under the sunshine of heaven, then in the torture of the awful world where there is no light but that of the conscience, the sense of evil and wrong-doing. Would it not be better and easier to repent now, with your wife waiting for you in heaven, and your mother waiting for you on earth?"

Will it be credible to my reader that Andrew interrupted his son with the words,

"Robert, it is dreadful to hear you talk like that. You don't believe the Bible."

It must be startling to one who has never heard the lips of a hoary old sinner drivel out religion. But it is not so startling as to hear the lips of sweet Christian women, yea, of lawn-sleeved bishops, say that the doctrines of the everlasting happiness of the righteous stands or falls with the doctrine of the hopeless damnation of the wicked. Of such, one would at first say, that to them the word is everything, the spirit nothing. But that would be unfair. It is only that the devil is playing a very wicked prank, not with them, but in them, and that they are pluming themselves on being selfish after a godly sort.

"I do believe the Bible, father, and have ordered my life by it. If I had not believed the Bible, I fear I should never have had the care to look for you. But I won't dispute about it. I only say I believe that you will be compelled to repent some day, and that now is the best time. You will not only have to repent then, but to repent that you did not repent now. And I tell you, father, that you *shall* go to my grandmother."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THREE GENERATIONS.

It was a cold, powdery January afternoon, with the snow thick on the ground, save where the little winds had blown the crown of the street bare before Mrs. Falconer's house, when a post-chaise with four horses swept wearily round the corner, and pulled up at her door. Falconer's feelings I dare not, Andrew's I cannot attempt to describe, as they stepped from the chaise, and approached the door, which Betty with a pale, old face held open for them. She led the way without a word into the little parlour. Robert strode in front, Andrew followed with gray, bowed head. Grannie was not in her chair. The doors which during most of the day concealed the bed in which she slept were open, and there lay the aged woman with her eyes closed. The room was just as it had always been, only there was a filmy shadow in it that Robert had never felt before.

"She's deen', sir," said Betty, and said no more.

Robert took his father's hand, and led him towards the bed. There they both stood bending tearless over the withered, but not very wrinkled face.



The smooth, white, soft hands lay on the sheet folded back over her bosom. She was asleep, or rather, she slumbered.

But the soul of the child began to grow in the withered heart of the old man as he regarded his older mother, and as it grew it forced the tears to his eyes, and the word to his lips.

"Mother!" he said, and her eyelids rose at once. He stooped to kiss her, with the tears rolling down his face. The light of heaven broke and flashed from her aged countenance. She lifted her weak hands, took his head, and held it to her bosom.

"Eh! the bonnie gray heid!" she said, and burst into a passion of weeping. She had kept some tears for the last. Now she would spend all that her griefs had left her. But there came a pause in her sobs, though not in her weeping, and then she spoke.

"I kent it a' the time, O Lord. I kent it a' the time. He's come hame. My Anerew, my Anerew! I'm as happy's a bairn. O Lord! O Lord!"

And she burst again into sobs, and entered paradise in radiant weeping.

Her hands sank away from his head, and when her son looked in her face he saw that she was dead. She had never looked at Robert.

The two men turned, gazed in each other's face, and fell into each other's arms.

When shall a man dare to say that God has done all he can?

#### THE END.

[*This History will be published with fuller detail, rendered impossible here from want of space, in the coming spring.*]



## A LOST FRIEND.

DEAR, I dreamt of you last Sunday even ;  
Slumbrous was the sermon, and the heat  
Weighed mine eyelids down, and summer perfumes  
Stole in on the breezes, slow and sweet :  
Leaning back, I half thought—"God is tender,  
Will not chide my sleeping at His feet."

Swiftly, like the Mene and Upharsin,  
Came a name upon my vision thrown ;  
Name of her who till one day, one moment,  
Was the noblest, rarest woman known.  
Then the preacher's voice came through my slumbers,  
"He that sinneth not may cast a stone."

Oh, my darling ! drowned out past remembrance,  
Would that I had died for thee, my friend !  
Any death that had but slain the body,  
Any death that with the life would end ;  
If a message could but reach you, reach you,  
What beseeching prayer would I send !

In my dream she stood at rest beside me,  
As we used to stand so long ago,  
Saying, "Little one, too much you love me."  
While I smiled, "Too much love cannot know."  
Then there came the shadow o'er her features,  
Shade prophetic of the coming woe.

If I love her still, does Christ not love her ?  
I can not forget, will He forget ?  
I have only will, who has the power,  
Somehow—He knows how—will save her yet.  
Dear lost jewel ! till I find you, find you,  
I will wear my diamond in jet.

Thus I dreamed, then woke to hear the organ  
Pealing "Peace on earth, good-will to men,  
Glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit,  
More than ever hath been shall be then ;  
When the angels have their great rejoicing,  
When the whole creation saith 'Amen.'"

S. A. D. I.

## "I DWELL AMONG MINE OWN PEOPLE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

THOSE who have a happy home will be most likely to realise the vast comprehensiveness of this statement. The composed dignity and contentment with which the Shunamite intimates to the prophet that there was nothing more he could give to her, such as would add to her happiness, indicates that condition of mind most to be envied, yet least likely to be realised on earth. Few amongst us have much, without requiring more; in the heart of the highest, as the lowest, there is mostly some. "Naboth's vineyard" that prevents our being perfectly happy and contented.

This state is not promised us here, yet the Shunamite was one of ourselves, and even lacked the common, but inestimable blessing of children. But she was content—she "dwelt among her own people." Moreover, she was sagacious and thoughtful, and had observed the ways of the prophet, preparing for his use "the little chamber in the wall." She was by no means a person of dull, vacant mind, whose chief happiness consisted in being permitted to pass her time "among her own people," contented with the supine indolence of a self-satisfied life. On the contrary, she seems to have been enriched by those qualities of sympathy and enthusiasm which are characteristic of women, and which constitute their principal charm. Nothing escaped her observation; she suffered nothing to interfere with the feeling of the moment. One can imagine that a woman so quick, ardent, and sympathetic in character, might have found more happiness abroad than at home. But the Shunamite was a perfect woman, she knew quite well the value of her qualities, and in making her home happy by the exercise of them, she realised the full measure of the royal feeling—"I dwell among mine own people." She made their happiness, as they made hers.

This truly would be a sorry world if some who are contented with their own lot were not to be met with. As to country, home, neighbours, and business, there are many amongst us so happy as to be precisely in the situation not only best for them, but what they most like. Among those who have made themselves conspicuous in the world by peculiar gifts, by genius of one kind or another, by perseverance or by opportunity, nearly all can trace their success to the junction of "provision" with "inclination." The bent of their fortunes turned towards the bias of their minds, thus enabling them to reach a higher step in their vocation, than any one less fortunate, who had to work against inclination. Yet although we may be contented with our lot, our duties, our every-day work, we may chance to be far from the serene contentment of the Shunamite. "I dwell among mine own people."

It is to be feared that to the very fact of our "dwelling among one's own people" we attribute many pains and crosses. We could progress much faster, work more cheerily, devote more time to the business we love, were we not bound down by family claims, harassed by kinsman's duties, worried by the jars and squabbles of relations. So far from finding one's happiness among one's own people, there is no peace or comfort to be got amongst

them. To obtain either, one is obliged to rush into the world, and seek it among strangers.

But perhaps the largeness of heart and tenderness of soul which we may imagine to have been the peculiar characteristic of the Shunamite are wanting in our home. We know not how to cover with love the faults of those with whom we live. We are incapable of drawing forth the exquisite charity that "thinketh no evil," that "hopeth against hope," that will not see that which it is kindest not to see. The petty passion of an hour is indulged in, the angry tongue runs glibly, words are spoken that rankle, and the serene atmosphere of a happy home is rent and torn asunder as the lightning shatters a stately oak in a storm. The tree may put forth leaves again, but never more in the pride and glory of full perfection. No home can experience the royalty of happiness if subjected to domestic storms like these.

And how are we to guard against the recurrence of these? how take into our hearts the full measure of that contentment which delights in saying—"I dwell among mine own people?" Of course, many will say—happiness is to be found everywhere, if we will but seek it; is not absolute at home only. We make our own happiness, wherever we go."

That is true; but there are few amongst us who do not feel the want and yearning for home love and forbearance. We go out and fight our way in the world, get jostled and thrust aside, but we know that at home, among our own people, we shall be tenderly treated, our blows and bruises carefully healed, our wounded pride soothed and reinstated, so that we can start forth again, to have another tussle in the world, more buoyant and hopeful than ever. So wonderfully irresistible and invigorating is the power of family love.

This meaning of the words, "I dwell among mine own people," may be traced in different classes of society.

"My lord," in the country, is affable, amiable, excellent; conscious that he somehow deserves the deference which greets him at every turn in his ancestral home; but when he goes up to London, he finds himself nothing and nobody, but one in a crowd. As he passes along the swarming streets, unknown and unnoticed, the reflection must cross his mind that at home, "among his own people," he is something and somebody; that the unheeding, busy, restless crowd about him are little aware what an excellent, amiable, affable personage they are jostling against. In his country town every man he meets touches his hat, every woman has her deferential curtsy ready, and when he is so condescending as to make little inquiries after their kinsfolk (which inquiries are often mal-apropos), then he tastes the pleasures of being so affable and amiable, and thinks with complacency of giving so much happiness at such little cost.

Of course it is right to go to London, it is a duty to show oneself among the great ones of the earth; but after all London is a bustling, money-making, vulgar town. And the habits of London are by no means healthy habits. It is a relief and a happiness to have done London, where one is only an atom in the crowd, and to go down to the country, "to dwell among one's own people," who know how excellent, and amiable, and affable one is, is

"My lady" also, who is supreme in the country, whose very nod was a condescension, whose one finger was a happiness, leads a very different life in London. In the country, she is the observed of all observers, the cynosure of fashion,—now she is as full of trepidation as a country girl, lest her train should be an inch too short, her chignon a shade too dark, or her dress a thought too high. She is in agony lest she should not be included in the first court, or not invited to some very aristocratic fête. In fact, she has descended from the state of a queen, to be an abject slave: and the change would not be bearable, but that fashion demands it, and fashion's demands must be complied with.

Nevertheless, it must be with feelings akin to those of a prisoner released from thralldom, that she leaves London and returns "to dwell among her own people." There she may wear a dress of any length, for it is sure to be admired. There she knows no party is considered worth notice unless she is present. There she is conscious that though Victoria is Queen of England, she is queen of Happylandshire, and envies no one in the world,—*"she dwells among her own people."*

Let us draw the simple, but laborious wife of a country parson out of her homely parsonage. She is invited to the annual dinner at the castle. She likes to go, notwithstanding that she has to drink out of the cup of mortification. She feels that though "my lord" consults "William" on all parish matters, and that though "my lady" is really kind and condescending, she has nothing in common with her or her company. In spite of Martha's delighted exclamation—"Laws, mum, you do look beautiful!" she sees that her dress is dowdy—nay, obsolete to the last degree. It appears, by "my lady's" style, that you cannot be too startling in the effects of dress. She remembers with sadness that she would not listen to the village milliner, but had this, her one new dress of the year, gathered in ample folds round her waist, just not touching the ground all round, in order that it might not get spotted. As to goring it, the idea of wasting so much good stuff was something sinful; besides, how could she then make a Sunday frock apiece for her little girls out of it when too shabby for her? Fashion might be as extravagant as it pleased, she must think of the future. But nevertheless she was painfully conscious of the effect of her full, short skirt, its very lustre and freshness adding to its unfashionableness, when it was compared with the long trains, the straight waists, the fully-developed figures of the grand people with whom she had the honour to dine.

And without in her heart arraigning their manner to her, she was perfectly conscious that her company was only tolerated out of courtesy, and her appearance not laughed at, only because there was so much of pity mixed up with their amusement. Yet, with the strange waywardness of the human heart, she would rather endure this mortification than miss her only glimpse of the fashionable world. She was more keenly anxious to witness that which never could be hers, than alive to those qualities she possessed, superior to them all. But these qualities made themselves felt, as the fragrant perfume of mignonette greeted her at her humble home, and instantly brought with it the remembrance of her position in that home; she remembers



how she was queen of it—absolutely necessary to its well-doing as to be almost the soul of it.

When she had passed the beds, and looked at her sleeping children, and saw the great basket of little clothes set aside to be mended on the morrow,—“William” begging her to remind him of some parochial duty to be done the first thing in the morning,—and Martha, too sleepy to make any comments on her mistress, surrendering to her arms a crowing, wakeful baby, the full measure of the happiness of her position burst upon her. Carefully putting away the old-fashioned dress, she took her baby into her arms, and as she crooned it to sleep she laughed to herself at the odd figures great ladies suffered themselves to be made into by fashion—wondered at their listlessness and apathy, considered with some awe as to what she should do had she no other duty to perform than to strive after every species of amusement, and to idle away the day in pleasure.

“Ah me!” she says to her baby, “I fear I should not be so amiable as they are. I am glad I have so much to do. There is good scattered everywhere for all of us, and nothing seems so good and pleasant to me as ‘dwelling in my own home among my people.’ Why should I long for that which would soon pall and disgust me? Why forget that my life has the dignity and importance of a Future attached to it, while theirs but seeks to cover the needs of the day?”

Did “my lady” think the same, as her maid divested her of her costly ornaments, her fashionable dress, and assisted her, tired out with pleasure, to bed? Fatigued though she was, “my lady” was as amiable and affable as “my lord.” She was not too tired to think of her unfashionable guest. “Poor little woman! what a figure she made. I wonder if she would be offended if I ordered her a proper dress from Milman’s. I hear she is such a good creature—working so hard at home, and yet so indefatigable in the parish. I wonder if ‘my lord’ has sent them a haunch of venison. I will remind him of that. But can they dress it? Perhaps game will be better. They are good people; but how could she make such a guy of herself?” These were the thoughts on which “my lady” fell asleep—forgetting entirely the ordeal she passed through in London, when she enacted the country lady with quite as much *mauvaise honte* as the little parson’s wife at the castle. These two instances show how absolutely necessary it is to true happiness to have one’s own home, one’s own people.

With what emotions of trembling ecstasy does the man with torn and wounded heart seek his long-forgotten home! He has grasped at shadows until, sick and depressed, he turns back to the substance, that Love which is the name by which the God of all has revealed himself to us. “Our people” may be dull and old-fashioned—our home may lack comforts and luxuries. But what wit and refinement can be substituted for love? What comfort or luxury can fill the place of forbearing affection?

Young men are very apt to go out into the world, despising the home in which they were reared, the old-fashioned but fond mother, the dowdy but loving sisters. The mother is too fussy, and teazes them with her tender ways; the sisters are too demonstrative, and have not that reticence which

is such a charm in women. They are gushing, and must be snubbed. Thus they despise a love which is incomparably superior to that of a strange woman, who, caring nothing for the man, rules and tyrannises over him, often making him do deeds he would scorn to do for his own people.

There are wives who take a pleasure in thinking every other woman has a kinder and better husband than herself. The peace of the house where she lives is precarious and fitful. She is fortunate if some mischance, or some folly of her own proves to her that there is no love like the enduring love of one's "own people." While the rest of the world are laughing at her, or scorning her, she is gathered into the comforting arms of her despised people, and restored to composure and happiness.

So just and immutable are the laws of God, that the highest and most powerful among the inhabitants of earth are indebted for much of their happiness to the lowest and meekest. None are so independent of their own kind as not to have a "neighbour," to whom they may be indebted for some of the "oil and wine" of human charity. The king on his throne must have a soothing hand to close his dying eyes; the strong and mighty are smitten down to require the tender fostering that infants receive. The rich and prosperous long for some trifle to make their happiness complete, that the cottager has in abundance, and can oblige the rich man with it—out of his abundance. We are not, and can never be, independent of each other.

This fact once established in our minds—and it is a fact that the proud independent heart of man is very loth to admit—it will not then be unbecoming in us to set forth the advantages of so living amongst one's own people as to receive joyfully from their eager and loving hands the ministrations we need, or shall need sooner or later. To be independent of family ties, of the claims of kindred, of the several excitements of the loves and happinesses of our own people, is simply to be possessed of a hard and selfish heart. To live unloved, and die unlamented, is the proper, but the deplorable fate of such persons. And with an exquisite sense of beauty and of fitness one turns from such characters to one which had lived among and delighted in his own people, so dwelling among them that on his death-bed every one shall mourn him as their best friend; feeling that he was as a father to them, and that they give him the tears of sorrowing sons. Such an one has not only dwelt among his own people, but his happiness has been bound up in theirs. He has felt their sorrows as his, their joys have rejoiced him; he was as lenient and tender to their faults as if they had been his own. He was observant of their wants; even his poor relations had "their little chamber in the wall." The claims of his kindred, never ignored, so enlarged his heart, and opened the fountains of his kindly nature, that he won the love, admiration, and respect of all who knew him. It may be grand to be a hero—to be regarded as a mortal gifted with an immortal talent; but it is better far to be able to say, with sincere truth and full plenitude of content, "I desire not to be over rich, nor to be high in the ranks of the world, nor to be the possessor of one great magnificent gift, I am content—'I dwell among mine own people.'"

## ABOUT SOUND.

PERHAPS there are few sciences which have been less successfully reduced to practice than the science of Acoustics.

How are you to build places to be heard in? How are you to generate sound to be heard?

Of course certain obvious discoveries have been made. The speaking-trumpet, the shrill cry of mountaineers, the shape of Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle and Mr. Distin's big drum, are so many obvious examples. But even here we are on debateable ground, for it is not likely that places as different in construction as Exeter Hall and Covent Garden should both be right; and if the Metropolitan Tabernacle is really a well-constructed place for sound, the Gothic erections of all kinds, with their rows of pillars and their interminable niches, must be the very worst.

But the personal experience of every one will suggest sufficiently curious problems in sound. There is a row of benches close under the first gallery at the bottom of St. James's Hall, where no one can hear distinctly, whilst those seated before and behind can hear perfectly; and similar cases are well known in many other public halls. The phenomena of sound out of doors are also strange. We may all have noticed on some days the sound of firing at Portsmouth or Shoeburyness, and remarked that the loudness did not altogether depend upon the direction of the wind, but probably upon the conditions of the atmosphere and the angle of our own position. It is well known by military men that the advance of troops and the sound of drums can be heard at immense distances by laying the ear level with the ground—and the sound of naval engagements is said to have travelled for hundreds of miles across water. On one occasion, in the middle of a summer's night, we were looking at the sea from our window, when suddenly, some way out, a little boat with two men shot into the bright track of the full moon, and seemed to cast anchor there; it looked like a small black patch upon the glowing water, and from that almost incredible distance, in the stillness, we could hear the voices of the men talking, sometimes even catch two or three words together, such as—"So he wouldn't go!" A slight change of position would make the rest of the sentence inaudible, then would come an indistinct sound, another word, and silence.

Of course there are theories of vibration which account for a good deal, and when we hear the invisible waves of sound being discussed, or glance at a paper on sound by Professor Tyndal, we feel ourselves sufficiently out of our depth to believe any explanation. We cannot, however, help suspecting that if the laws of sound were more perfectly known, there would be a greater consent amongst architects in the building of halls and temples, and a greater number of valuable rules for the guidance of public speakers, singers, and players.

No doubt the defects of every room may be in a great measure overcome by the skill of the speaker. A good speaker will say of a room that it was a

difficult place to speak in—not meaning that he could not be heard, but that he was sensible of having to employ considerable vigilance, artifice, or exertion before he could feel that he was heard. A few sound rules for public speaking, based on natural laws, would be the greatest boon both to speakers and the public.

It is remarkable how practically every one is left to make his own discoveries. The speaker is told, "You must pronounce every syllable distinctly;" the singer is told, "You must develop your note," or "You must exaggerate your *pianos* and *fortes*;" in short, every one is left to make the best of it without any reference to big rooms, little rooms, square rooms, tents, or hustings. And yet there are certain laws which every successful speaker or player hits upon by instinct, but which he is not able to explain or to impart. Hence it follows that every artist is sent before the public on a voyage of discovery, and only those who have the necessary peculiar gift succeed in making themselves heard. Impressive success is of course at all times reserved for the few, but moderate success—let us say in reading the church service—might be attained by many if certain rules with which we may possibly be unacquainted were better known and more attended to.

There never yet was a great artist who had not acquired the secret of making himself generally heard in any room which he selected for his performance.

Of course being heard depends upon the hearer as well as the speaker, and the power of being heard will always half consist in the power to create listeners; but the other half is mechanical and physical, and depends upon the method and tact employed in generating the succession of sounds.

The volume of sound is altogether of secondary importance; like compass, it has its own special merits; and any one who can sing as low as old Lablache, or as high as Mademoiselle Carlotta Patti, or as loud as Herr Wachtel, will no doubt have, as Tamburini used to say, "*cinq cent mille francs dans leur gosier*."

But volume and compass are not half so essential as quality and intonation. A speaker will often fill a large building with sound without conveying an idea to the minds or a single sentence to the ears of his hearers.

It is instructive and entertaining to hear the mob orators who usually precede Mr. Bright on popular occasions. The advanced shoemaker and the radical tailor may labour to impress the people of England with a just sense of their country's peril from the vile machinations of an abandoned aristocracy. In vain! They cannot even roar down the hum of general light conversation which goes on till the speech of the evening begins. The reason is obvious—nobody could hear if they listened; and it may be added, nobody would care to listen if they could hear.

Mr. Bright, like most other good speakers, seldom seems to be speaking louder than other people, and never at the beginning, which is always calm and quiet like a chat by the fireside. But nothing is lost; the words never crowd each other out of hearing, but all travel quietly home to the mark, like so many arrows shot by a skilled archer. We do not say that at times there does not come such a shower of missiles that the very sky

seems darkened, and his adversaries, like the Spartan warriors, have to fight in the dark; we only observe that the arrows are never wasted.

Henry Melvill was equally successful in making himself heard, though with less voice and more rapid utterance, at times pouring forth a shrill torrent of words—the meaning of each sentence seldom escaped—the words bit like acid, and the meaning branded like fire. People sometimes complained of the heat or of the metaphors—but no one came away saying they could not hear.

"I go to hear him again?—never!" exclaimed an indignant old lady. "The last time I went I was nearly crushed to death, and I heard him say 'he saw grey hairs on the firmament.'"

Probably the worst public speaker of any importance is General Garibaldi; he chops the end of his words, and the beginning is not seldom rendered indistinct by a kind of suppressed emotion. But as every one knows what he is going to say beforehand, his articulation is of the less importance. We once heard him address a revolutionary mob from a balcony at Naples, and the enthusiasm of outsiders, who could not possibly have heard a syllable of his thick, rapid, and impassioned utterances, was certainly far greater than those who, like ourselves, were standing close by and heard every word.

No class of persons are required to study the travelling qualities of sound more than actors. The actor—who has constantly to change his standpoint, varying sometimes in distance from the footlights to the back of the stage—must speak differently in each place if he is to be heard in the house, and the skilled actor instinctively does so. "I usually speak to some man in the top gallery," said Macready, "and then feel sure if he can hear everybody else must." And, roughly speaking, this may be a sound canon.

Hardly any young actor is properly heard at first, and the ranter least of all; but even trivial conversation carried on in a low tone by experienced actors will be distinctly audible, and most of us remember the fearful distinctness of Madame Ristori's whisper in *Medea*—from the very bottom of the stage.

All great instrumental performers possess the same strange dominion over space. One might suppose at first that players were at the mercy of their instruments, but they are no more so than speakers are at the mercy of their voices. A skilful speaker with an indifferent voice will catch the key-notes of a building, and others which have a certain vibratory relation to them, until his periods become almost harmonic and the sentences begin to linger in the ear with a certain caressing charm.

The little boy who cries the "Morning Pepper!" at the Crystal Palace station, and who has caught the echo of the place, has no difficulty in screaming down all his rivals.

When Paganini engaged the Opera House and announced himself as sole performer, people smiled at the notion of a fiddler, and a fiddler on one string too, filling the place; but it was found that he not only filled it with sound, but with people too, and his pockets with cash into the bargain. We may dwell upon his extraordinary appearance, and his original manner, etc., but depend upon it, these would not have told if he had not been heard,



and he was heard because he had the gift of entering into sympathy with his building, and sending the sound along the lines of its vibration. Every instrument, whatever be the quality of its sound, is largely open to this kind of management—the organ less so than any, because it remains unaffected by the touch of the player; the violin more so than any, because it vibrates most immediately to the touch. Some qualities of sound in themselves travel better than others; sound generated by a tongue, as in a clarionette, is more piercing than the sound from a tube simply pierced like the flute.

But the good player is never entirely at the mercy of his instrument. He can always—either by breath, as in the flute, or by motion, as in the concertina, or to some extent by stops and pedals, as in the organ, or by touch acting directly, as in the harp and violin, or indirectly through percussion, as in the piano—control and adapt the sound until he feels the room itself (audience or no audience) has begun to listen to him.

The piano at first would seem the most unmanageable from this point of view. The note once struck cannot be re-struck; do what you will with the pedals, the vibrations begin to die away steadily the moment the blow has ceased; and thus all those crescendos of individual notes, so effective on other instruments and in the human voice, are denied to it.

Again, the vibrations are in no direct connection with the player's touch; the touch, such as it is, is not continuous, and in a grand piano no less than seventy-five pieces of wood, ivory, metal, etc., stand between the finger and the chord struck. And yet no instrument is so dependent on the player for its sound-power as the piano.

It is often said that one violin does not sound like the same instrument in two different hands. Every player has his own touch and his own tone power; but the same is true of the piano, mechanical as it may seem to some. M. Thalberg writes, "No two players touch the instrument alike; that is, no two players have the same mechanical action in their fingers, or produce *the same tone*, and the difference in the style and degree of excellence in pianists is more owing to this than to any other cause."

Of course the mechanism which seems so complicated and indirect has for its object to make the touch as direct as possible, so that the piano may participate to some extent in that sensibility of touch which is observable in the harp, and which is the consequence of the finger acting immediately on the string without the intervention of any other mechanism.

Every great pianist has his own tone, which he communicates in some degree to every piano. He also has his own view as to where the instrument is to stand. When M. Thalberg played under the centre transept at the Crystal Palace, he had his piano moved half way up the Handel orchestra.

A piano under the centre transept one would have supposed to be about as effective as a musical box under the dome of St. Paul's, but M. Thalberg was perfectly well heard.

The idea that thumping a piano causes it to be heard better is erroneous. When good players bang, as they do sometimes, it is not with this view. In all ordinary cases we are safe in condemning this practice as the mistake of

shallow minds, and the refuge of feeble executants. Herr Liszt and M. Rubinstein of course have a perfect right to bang their instruments, to the breaking of bands and the explosion of things in general; but with them it is not because they cannot make themselves heard otherwise; still less is it the feeble and purposeless frenzy of men who cannot develop legitimately the power of the piano, and seek to hide with noise the poverty of their own resources. It is more like the noble despair of men who, having reached the boundaries of their instrument and their art, see for ever an immeasurable beyond, and forget for a moment the frail barriers which oppose themselves to their fiery and indomitable progress. No doubt the real artist, *as such*, never oversteps the modesty of nature, nor forgets those inexorable limits beyond which he cannot pass without the exercise of a certain painful and forbidden violence. The best examples of the noblest and altogether unexaggerated bloom of art in sculpture are of course the Phidian marbles. The best living illustrations in the realm of executive music are M. Charles Hallé and Herr Joachim; the tone produced by both of these men travels without the aid of noise, and subdues without violence; and yet the wild attempts of a Paganini or a Liszt, like the statues of Angelo or the imagery of Dante, remind us of a sphere into which it may be good for the soul of man sometimes to escape, and we cannot choose but feel grateful to those profound and impassioned natures who seem for ever attempting to realise the colossal forms of an ideal world out of all proportion to our own.

H. R. HAWERS.



## THE MAGIC FLOWER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

## PART II.

CARLOTTA and her uncle having secured their seats, the former looked round for her mother, but she did not arrive for some time, and all the places around them were speedily occupied, in spite of their expostulations and representations that they were keeping a seat for a person who would shortly arrive. At last Carlotta saw her mother standing on one of the back seats, and as her uncle would not allow his sister to remain in that inconvenient position, he beckoned to her to advance, which she did, making her way with some difficulty through the crowd. At last she was comfortably seated beside her daughter, her brother retiring to the back benches, where he remained until the day's proceedings were brought to a close.

As soon as Carlotta and her mother had seated themselves they looked round, and were for some moments completely dazzled by the magnificent preparations which had been made for the tournament. The place enclosed for the combatants was an oblong of considerable extent, three sides of which were fenced with wooden barricades, which rose to the height of six or seven feet, and were covered with magnificent embroidery. Behind this were placed several rows of seats, each rising gradually above the other, so as to give the spectators a full opportunity of viewing the tournament. At one of the smaller sides of the parallelogram was raised a magnificent *loggione* for the accommodation of the Duke and the nobles of his court. In the centre at the other end was a void concealed by curtains so formed as to draw aside easily to permit the entrance of the combatants, and other persons having a part in the proceedings. The vast compartment set apart for the court was as yet empty, as it would not have been accordant with etiquette for any one to have occupied their places before the Duke had entered, but the whole remaining portion of the space was densely crowded with spectators, all in their holiday dress, and in the highest good humour.

The sound of many trumpets was now heard, which told that the Duke and his court had arrived, and all eyes were at once turned to the *loggione* to see him enter, which he did in great state. First came six pages dressed in black and yellow striped tunics; then a hundred gentlemen of the court, arrayed in black velvet tunics, with close-fitting pantaloons of black and yellow stripes, and with velvet caps on their heads, adorned with eagles' plumes. Next followed the governors of the different towns then comprised in the Duchy of Milan. After these again came the bishops, clad in their richest robes, ornamented with gold, headed by the cardinal himself. These were followed by the Duke Azohi Visconti, and his lovely wife Catherine of Savoy.

Nothing could exceed the splendour of the costumes worn by the Duke and his Duchess. The dress of the former was of mulberry-coloured velvet. It reached to the knees, and was richly ornamented with gold embroidery.

The sleeves were of white satin, fitting close to the arm. His cap was of green velvet, thickly embroidered with gold. The Duchess wore a long robe of dark-coloured satin, and her stomacher was so thickly covered with jewels that it almost dazzled the eye when the sun fell upon it. Over her tight white satin sleeves she wore loose ones, which hung open from the shoulder and reached to the feet, while on her head was a magnificent tiara of diamonds. The ladies of the court, all superbly dressed, followed the Duke and Duchess; and among them, remarkable especially for their great beauty and richness of attire, were the Marchioness Caranzi and her daughter Erminia. A crowd of gentlemen and others attached to the court completed a procession which for magnificence could scarcely have been surpassed in any capital in Europe.

The Duke and Duchess having taken their seats, their example was followed by the nobles and ladies of the court. The Marchioness and her daughter, who sat in the front row, were easily seen from the spot where Carlotta and her mother were seated. Although Carlotta had never seen Erminia before, her attention was now drawn to her at once as if by instinct. Carlotta had a lower opinion of her own attractions than is sometimes the case with persons less prepossessing; and a flutter of fear passed over her as she looked on the splendidly-dressed Erminia, and thought how little her own charms could compare with those of her stately rival. Certainly, as far as dress went, Erminia had the advantage, which was by no means a small one. But although she was what is generally styled handsome, her beauty was far behind that of the lovely peasant girl who at that moment so envied her.

Carlotta's reflections were interrupted by the sound of trumpets outside that portion of the enclosure opposite the Duke's *loggione*. The curtains were immediately afterwards drawn aside, and six richly-dressed heralds, representing the towns of Bergamo, Vercelli, Vigivano, Treviglio, Pavia, and Cremona, entered. From each of these towns a combatant for the tournament had been selected, chosen from the highest families in the locality. The Duke now gave the signal for the jousts to commence, and two of the combatants, attended by their esquires and pages, entered the lists. It would be useless to detain the reader with a description of the two first combats. The third and last was to take place between the two young nobles—one the willing, and the other the unwilling, suitor for the hand of Erminia. When young Miniscalchi entered the lists, arrayed *cap-à-pie* in a splendid suit of Milanese steel, and attended by his esquire and page, poor Carlotta could not sustain herself erect, but leant against her mother for support. So great was her admiration of the magnificent figure he presented, that for the moment she quite forgot the influence she imagined the flower would exercise over him; but, as he came nearer to her, it again returned to her mind, and she waited with intense anxiety as to what effect it would produce. Although he advanced laterally in her direction, he evidently did not perceive her, his eyes being fixed on the Duke and his court. "Never mind," thought Carlotta, "he must look at me presently, whether he wishes it or no, that is certain." But the poor girl was doomed to be disappointed. When he was within twenty yards of the spot where she was seated, his horse—a young

spirited creature—suddenly made a demi-volt, and then started forward rapidly for some paces, carrying him far beyond Carlotta and her mother. The poor girl was dreadfully disappointed, but made no remark, and waited anxiously for another opportunity.

The trumpets sounded again, and Miniscalchi's opponent, the young Count Andreozzi, advanced, and having saluted the Duke, the combatants closed their visors, and each took up his position. The charge was sounded, and they rushed forward to the attack. Of what took place Carlotta saw nothing. A thick mist rose before her eyes, and she would have fainted had it not been for a loud shout which arose on all sides around her. She now raised her eyes, and saw her lover sitting proudly erect on his horse in the centre of the lists; while his adversary, who had been thrown on the ground, was being carried off by the attendants. The space having been cleared, young Miniscalchi, as the victor, advanced to salute the Duke and Duchess. That ceremony over, all now regarded him with fixed attention, anxious to discover whom he would salute as the Queen of Beauty. They were not long in doubt, for as soon as Miniscalchi had quitted the Duke's presence, he turned his horse's head towards the Countess Erminia, and lowering his lance, saluted her as the Queen. At this a loud shout of approbation arose from the spectators. But Carlotta heard it not. A singular change seemed to have come over her usually placid countenance. For a moment she glared savagely at the Marchioness and her daughter; and then suddenly rising from her seat, she snatched the flower from her hair, and threw it indignantly, as far from her as she could, into the arena. She then seized her mother by the arm, and said—

"Come away, come away, or I shall go mad. Come away, I say. I can support this no longer."

Her mother, terrified at the expression of her countenance, attempted to soothe her, but in vain. Carlotta held her by the arm, and dragged her onwards as she thrust her way through the bystanders. After she had reached the last row of benches, her uncle met them, and asked what was the matter with her.

"Come away, I say," was all the answer he could obtain from her. "Come away, or I shall go mad."

The good man offered no objection, though he was evidently much astonished at the behaviour of his niece. The three hurried on till they arrived at the Falcone, where the mule was speedily saddled; and as soon as Carlotta had seated herself behind her uncle, they started homewards, the mother following on foot. For some time after they had quitted the town no conversation passed between them. Carlotta sat erect as a statue on the mule, her lips tightly compressed, and her eyes glaring savagely around her. Suddenly her determination gave way, and she burst into tears. She wept so bitterly that they thought she would have fallen from her seat. Her uncle and her mother assisted her to descend, and placed her on a bank by the roadside, doing everything in their power to console her. But all their endeavours were of no avail, and Carlotta wept on even more bitterly than before.



"What has she done with the flower she had in her hair?" said the uncle to her mother.

"I don't know her reason," said the mother, "but before we left the tournament she suddenly started up, and tearing it from her hair, she threw it away from her."

"Ah! I am sure there is something wrong about that flower," said the uncle. "I hope there is no magic in it, but I strongly suspect there is."

A crowd now began to gather round them, and Carlotta, having recovered her presence of mind sufficiently to desire to avoid the notice of strangers, once more took her seat on the mule, which her uncle now led. They did not stop again till they had arrived at their cottage, where for the present we will leave Carlotta, sedulously attended by her mother and uncle, and, returning to the lists, will try to trace the events which were passing there.

Although the eyes of the spectators were turned upon the *loggione* and what was transpiring there, Carlotta's behaviour, for the moment, drew considerable attention from those near her. Her mother, however, speedily allayed this concern by informing them that her daughter only felt faint from the heat of the day. As soon as the seats they had occupied were filled up, a woman, who had been sitting beside Carlotta, beckoned to two pages who were below in the area. One of the boys immediately advanced towards her, and inquired what she wanted.

"I wish you would be so kind as to give me that pretty flower," she said, as she pointed to where the flower lay. "A friend of mine has just dropped it."

The boy proceeded to obey her, and took up the flower; but both he and his companion were so struck with its extraordinary beauty that they stood still, looking at it intently.

"I wonder where she got this flower from?" at last said the boy who had picked it up, to his companion.

"To whom does it belong?" inquired the other.

"To the woman who spoke to me. She says that her friend dropped it."

"Nonsense!" said the other. "It was at least a dozen yards from her; and it does not belong to her, I am sure. If I were you, I would keep it myself."

The page followed his companion's advice, and, without taking any further notice of the woman, he advanced towards the *loggione*, which, although the day's proceedings were terminated, was still filled with spectators. The Duke and Duchess had not yet quitted their seats, being engaged in conversation with the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan. As the boy, still holding the flower in his hand, was passing the spot where the Marchioness and her daughter were seated, the former, noticing the flower beckoned, to the boy to approach her.

"My pretty page," she said, "where did you find that beautiful flower? If you do not want it, I wish you would give it to me."

The lad, who had without hesitation refused it to the peasant woman, found himself in a different position with the Marchioness, who was very well known to him by sight. With a hardly-suppressed sigh he handed the flower to her, and then rejoined his companion.

The Marchioness then endeavoured to attract her daughter's attention by showing the flower to her, but she seemed to take no notice of it. Her mind was, at the moment, too much occupied with the misfortune which had befallen the youth whom she secretly loved, although she had been already assured that he had received no injury from his fall. Finding she could not make Erminia attend to her, the Marchioness placed the flower in her own bosom, and had hardly done so when Count Miniscalchi, the father, advanced towards them.

"How fortunate Edgardo has been to-day!" he said, addressing the Marchioness. "I wonder how far your good wishes and those of your daughter contributed to his success."

"If good wishes could have been of any use," said the Marchioness, "no little portion of the honour he has obtained is due to us. Am I not right, Erminia?" she continued.

Erminia, however, made no reply, but kept her eyes fixed upon the ground. The Count noticed her pallid looks, and inquired of the mother whether the heat had not been too much for her.

"I fear it has," replied the Marchioness, "and that, added to the excitement of the scene, has somewhat overcome her. But, Count," she continued, turning from the subject, "you must be very proud of your son."

"I am very proud of him indeed," was the reply. "And I trust, in a little time, you will look upon him in the same light as I do. But let me ask from whom did you obtain that beautiful flower? I never saw one like it before."

"It is very lovely," was the reply of the Marchioness. "I saw it in the hand of a page who was passing, and who, on noticing my admiration for it, gave it to me. Since it pleases you so much, pray allow me to offer it to you."

"I am almost ashamed to take it from you," said the Count, gallantly; "but, as our Italian proverb says, 'It is a courtesy to offer, but a greater to accept,' I will not refuse it. At the same time, however, you would greatly add to the obligation if you taught me how to wear it."

The Marchioness, after a moment's hesitation, took the flower in her hand, and placing it on the Count's breast, near the region of his heart (accidentally, of course), told him that it would look well there, as it would be set off by his dark velvet dress. The Count attempted to fix it in its position, but so clumsily, that the Marchioness was obliged to assist him.

"I shall look like a bridegroom adorned in this manner," he said jestingly.

The Marchioness said nothing, but raised her eyes (which, by the way, were very fine ones) till they met his, and afterwards neither of them spoke a word, a general movement having just then taken place among the spectators to quit the *loggione*. They were soon afterwards separated by the crowd, and the Marchioness left, attended by her own people.

The streets of Como were now one continuous scene of bustle, confusion, and gaiety, hundreds departing on their road homewards, while others fairly besieged the provision-shops and inns. The Falcone did a roaring trade that day, and great were the profits of the landlord. Not only was the inn-yard

completely crowded with guests, but seats and tables were placed in front of the house so far into the street as considerably to impede the traffic. At one of these tables a number of ill-looking men were seated, who, judging from the crossbows and other arms they carried, as well as their style of conversation, were evidently disbanded *condottieri*, lately dismissed from the Milanese army, after the termination of the dispute between the Duke Azoni Visconti and Ludovico, and the total overthrow of the latter. Among these men was a civilian, who, partially intoxicated, was chattering with great volubility, much to the amusement of the rest. He boasted immensely of the great wealth of his master, who, he told them, never travelled without his purse being well filled with gold, as well as wearing finger-rings of enormous value.

"Your master must be a lucky man," said one of the *condottieri*. "What is his name?"

"The illustrious Count Miniscalchi," said Pietro, the servant.

"Is he here to-day?"

"Indeed he is," said Pietro. "It was his son who was conqueror in the last combat."

"And has he got as much money and as many jewels as usual to-day?" inquired the soldier.

"Certainly," said Pietro; "his gold chain alone is worth a thousand ducats."

Here a temporary stop was put to the conversation by the sight of some ten or fifteen nobles, followed by their retainers, advancing in the direction of the inn.

"Here comes my master," said Pietro. "How much grander he looks than any of the other nobles!"

"To my eyes," the soldier said, "there does not seem much difference between them. Which is your master?"

"That one in the foremost rank, with a white flower in his breast. Is he not a handsome man?"

"He is indeed," said the soldier, turning his gaze on the Count, and marking him attentively, as did his companions also. "Whither is he now going?"

"He is to dine with the Governor, and afterwards Giacomo and myself are to attend him as he returns home."

"Which road do you take?" inquired the soldier.

"We shall go with the others as far as Camerlata, and then turning to the left, we shall continue our course towards the Count's castle, where he will sleep to-night."

We must now return to Dame Zampi's cottage. Carlotta for some hours gave full sway to her grief; and her uncle, finding he had not the power to console her, left her with her mother, and bent his steps homewards. Shortly afterwards, Carlotta gave her mother her entire confidence. The good woman listened with intense sympathy and interest to what her daughter told her. When she had concluded, her mother brought forward all the commonplace arguments she could in order to console her. She reminded her how great was the difference of position between her and the young noble whom she loved;

how awkward she would feel among the great ladies of the court; how she would be ridiculed by them for her rustic manners; and how happy she might be if she contented herself with marrying one in her own rank of life. To all these arguments Carlotta willingly assented, although her tears continued to fall abundantly. Towards midnight, finding the poor girl somewhat calmer, her mother advised her to retire to bed, and Carlotta followed her advice.

It was near daybreak, however, before Carlotta had fairly sobbed herself to sleep, and soon afterwards her rest was broken by some one knocking violently at the door of the cottage.

Dame Zampi rose and opened the door. She saw advancing towards her three peasants, neighbours of hers, with whom she was acquainted, bearing in their arms the apparently lifeless body of a man richly dressed.

"Oh, mother!" said one of the men, "we have brought you a sad present this morning. As we were going to our work, we found this signore, lying on the ground under his horse, totally senseless. We raised him the best way we could, and have brought him here. He has evidently been robbed, for he has no money on him, and his horse has been killed by a crossbow-bolt. I wonder who he can be. He is evidently some great noble, as we may see from the rich dress he has on, as well as the fine horse he rode, and its appointments."

"What ought I to do?" inquired the affrighted woman. "If you bring him in here, they will think I have murdered him."

"Nonsense," said the man; "how can they think that? You must get a bed ready for him, and take every care of him. He is not dead yet, and may recover. Who knows but your fortune may be made by taking care of him?"

The old woman now hastily prepared her own bed, and the stranger, still insensible, was placed on it. At this moment Carlotta, who had been roused by the noise, entered the room, and advanced to the bedside. As soon as she saw the wounded man, she uttered a loud cry of surprise, for on his breast she saw the camellia she had worn in her hair the previous day.

"Do you know him, dear Carlotta?" her mother inquired.

"I do not," she replied. "But do you not see that this is the flower I wore yesterday in my hair?"—evidently under the impression that the flower was in some mysterious manner connected with the stranger's arrival, whom, as she had never before seen, she did not recognize as the father of her lover. Carlotta took the opportunity, when her mother was conversing with the peasants on what they had better do in the emergency, to take the flower and carry it unobserved into her own room, where she placed it in water beneath the picture of the Virgin, and then joined her mother in the other room.

During her short absence it had been determined that one of the peasants should start immediately to Como for a doctor; that another should present himself before the commandant of the castle, and narrate to him what had taken place; while the third should remain at the cottage to assist Carlotta and her mother in attending on the wounded man.

Two hours had scarcely elapsed when both messengers returned. One was accompanied by a celebrated leech, and the other by a lieutenant and three

soldiers. No sooner had the lieutenant entered the room where the wounded man was, than he recognized him as the noble Count Miniscalchi. The officer then made inquiries of the peasants as to where they had found the Count, the position in which he was lying, and all the circumstances necessary to aid in tracing the evil-doers. In the meanwhile the doctor carefully examined his patient, and found that he was suffering from concussion of the brain, as well as from a severe contusion of one leg. He ordered that the strictest quiet should be maintained in the house, and that the greatest care and attention should be paid to the wounded man. He then saw him comfortably placed in bed, and left the cottage, promising to return in the evening. When he returned, he found that the Count had partially regained possession of his senses, but was still in a very precarious condition. He ordered that the same treatment should be continued, and perfect quiet observed, and that in no case should the Count be permitted to see strangers, or even any of his own family, as, in his position, the slightest mental shock might be fatal.

During the night a great change for the better took place in the Count. He gained possession of his mental faculties, but still remained lamentably weak. The next day, while the leech was paying his visit, and Carlotta was absent for a few moments from the house, young Miniscalchi was seen advancing towards the cottage-door on horseback. The leech immediately recognized him, and went to meet him.

"Contino," he said, "I am happy to tell you that your father is much better this morning. He is still unfit to see anybody, however, or to suffer the slightest shock to his mind. Take my advice, and do not ask to see him. I can easily imagine your anxiety, but you should at the same time be prudent. Return to-morrow, and then we will see what progress he has made."

The young Miniscalchi now entered into conversation with the doctor; but, although he was evidently much interested in the fate of his father, it might have been noticed that his eyes wandered very much. Presently Carlotta appeared advancing towards the house. No sooner did she recognize her lover than a faintness came over her, so that she was on the point of falling, but she recovered herself by a strong effort, and darted aside without his seeing her.

"Doctor," the Contino said at last to the leech, "I do not like waiting till to-morrow, so I will return this evening. I wish you would meet me. I promise you that I will not speak to my father without your permission."

The doctor agreed to this, and the young Count left him. Shortly after the doctor returned to his patient Carlotta entered the house.

"I told that young fellow," he said to Carlotta's mother, "that I would meet him here to-night; but it will be very inconvenient for me to do so. He must be obeyed, however, and, should he arrive here before I do (which is very probable), keep him engaged in conversation as you best can till I come. He must not be allowed to speak to his father until I give permission."

Carlotta heard all the doctor said, but made no remark. Shortly afterwards she retired to her room, and seating herself on her bed began to



consider what course it was best for her to pursue. Her pride and her love fought a hard fight. The one counselled her to decline seeing her admirer, and the other urged her to do so. For some time she remained undecided, when, suddenly raising her eyes, they fell upon the flower. The idea now flashed into her mind that it had possessed far greater power than she had imagined. At last she resolved that she would discover the truth by wearing it in her hair that evening when the Contino arrived. She would thus ascertain what were its real qualities, and whether she had done it injustice when she threw it from her so scornfully the previous day. She now resumed her duties as nurse till the evening began to approach, when she handed over the care of the sick man to her mother, and retired to her chamber to put the flower in her hair, and to make other little preparations before the Contino should arrive. If the doctor was somewhat late, young Miniscalchi was, at least, as much too early. As he rode up to the house he perceived Carlotta in a field near it, apparently occupied in gathering lilies. He immediately dismounted, and, having tied his horse to a tree, advanced to meet her. When Carlotta saw him she was unable to speak, and stood motionless, with one hand pressed on her heart, the lilies she had just gathered in the other, and her eyes on the ground.

Never before had she looked so lovely in the Contino's eyes, and all his affection for her returned. Everything seemed propitious. They were alone, the evening was calm and beautiful, and the birds in the trees around them were singing their evening song. The interview between the lovers need hardly be described. Suffice it to say, that before it had terminated the young nobleman had in the most decided manner broken the promise he had made to his father not to speak to Carlotta again; while, on her part, she no longer doubted in the slightest degree the powerful magic influence possessed by the flower.

It was some days before the Count was sufficiently recovered to see his son, who, however, received at least twice daily, from the lips of Carlotta, a report of his state. At last the doctor removed the restriction he had placed upon the young Count, and he was allowed to see his father. The interview between them was long and affecting. Young Miniscalchi listened with great interest to the account his father gave of the manner in which he had been attacked and robbed by a number of crossbowmen, who had waylaid him on his road home; and that his two servants had, in the most cowardly way, deserted him. In return he heard from his son that the robbers had been arrested, and were now under sentence of death in the Castle of Monza. One of them had confessed that they had been tempted to commit the deed by a description given by his servant of the great wealth the Count had with him, and that in pointing him out he had been distinguished from the other noblemen by the white flower he wore on his breast. It should be noted, however, that the son made no remark to his father on the disobedience he had been guilty of in speaking to Carlotta, probably fearing it might have an injurious effect on him in his then weak state of health.

The Count remained at the cottage for some weeks, during which time he was tenderly nursed by Carlotta and her mother—principally by the former.

In return he began to entertain for her an affection so strong and pure, that it could scarcely have been exceeded had she been his own daughter. At last young Miniscalchi found courage to tell his father who the beautiful girl who had so faithfully nursed him really was, and he confessed likewise the disobedience he had been guilty of in speaking to her without his permission. The Count remained silent for some moments, and then, suddenly turning his gaze on his son, said to him in a kind voice,—

“Edgardo, had I been of your age, I should have acted exactly as you have done, and therefore I have no right to blame you. If Carlotta is as willing to accept you as a husband as I am to receive her as a daughter, she will love you dearly indeed.”

Little more remains to be told, at least directly connected with our narrative, although the effect produced by the magic flower on others was scarcely less than that exercised on the fortunes of Carlotta and Edgardo. Erminia's match with young Miniscalchi was broken off, and shortly afterwards she married the young Count Andreozzi, and a close friendship was established between him and Edgardo. It remained doubtful for some time whether another union would not take place, between the Marchioness and the Count Miniscalchi himself. If, however, such a match was ever contemplated, it never was carried out, although ever afterwards the Count and the Marchioness continued on terms of the warmest friendship with each other.



## AFTER THE FALL.

(*Adam loquitur.*)

### PART I.

THE mercy-light that first began  
 Within his eyes when I was made—  
 Is vanished, and the love that ran  
 Round all his limbs is disarrayed—  
 He's fallen God to fallen man.

Mercy and love, that were to be  
 His crowning glories, stronger proofs  
 Of Godhead than his sun or sea,  
 Are trampled 'neath the devil's hoofs,  
 He's spoiled of his divinity.

He sitteth with his stony face,  
 All white about his stony eyes,  
 His hands above his breasts embrace,  
 His lips are rigid to despise  
 The father of the human race.

Henceforth grey justice is the law,  
 Justice that pities not nor feels,  
 The eager eye for every flaw,  
 Hell-shadows trailed behind our heels,  
 And fear of Satan's fiery claw.

How can He help it? for my fall  
 Brought out the shaming laugh that ran  
 Behind hell's adamant wall  
 At God's great failure in the man  
 That was to be the crown of all.

How can he help it? for my sin  
 Is children's ignorance beside  
 The giant crimes that stalk within  
 The fearful future opened wide  
 To mock me with its devil's grin:

Sins countless in their hideous sum,  
 God-mocking in God's open sight,  
 And strong to strike his knowledge dumb—  
 What were to them an apple-bite  
 Or Cain's mad murder soon to come!

Oh God! if sin must bear its fruits  
 Take back the yearnings once again  
 That make our souls; wring out the roots  
 Of Godhood from the human brain,  
 And let us wallow down to brutes.

Here, God! 'twas all a big mistake  
 To mould man out of good and ill—  
 Half-beast, half-angel; while the snake,  
 His foe, is all an angel still,  
 With all earth tempting for his sake.

Leave us, I say: put Satan high,  
 Thy morning star for evermore;  
 Take him and leave us here to die,  
 As mastodons have died before,  
 Without a hope beyond the sky.

Still had we God's great fellowship,  
 God's love to light our earth of graves,  
 Complaint were dead upon my lip:  
 But make me not the sire of slaves,  
 Though God be he that holds the whip.

Should all our steps be made in fear,  
 And love be nevermore the law,  
 What profits, God! that men are here,  
 Brutes, wanting in the tail and claw,  
 And God but bigger brute appear?

Were it not better to fulfil  
 Thine ancient ends 'gainst every odds,  
 To make good blossom out of ill,  
 Make men to blossom into gods,  
 And have the laugh at Satan still?

Here, God! I kiss my father's face;  
 Nay, angry father! here I kneel  
 To hold thy feet in mine embrace;  
 Crush Adam underneath thy heel  
 Or lift him to his empty place!

Think of thyself: how will the host  
 Of devils, quick to triumph, sneer,  
 When through the ages all thy boast  
 Will be that men must serve for fear,  
 The holiest who can whine the most?

Up for thy honour here I stand,  
 For thee against thyself I fight;  
 Be God again, let all the land  
 Leap out in gladness, and the might  
 Of love put all hearts in thy hand!

Adam would give his bosom's blood  
 To see his father's shame depart.  
 Bah! what are sins to stop the good  
 Love-gathered in thy mighty heart?  
 Why shouldst thou be misunderstood

By all the men that are to be  
 With manhood mine, whose whitest shame  
 Were patent, if they bent the knee  
 In fear, although the central flame  
 Were threatened them eternally?

---

#### PART II.

Eve! dearest still, as heretofore,  
 Ere Eden trees had lost their bloom;  
 Bone of my bone! the Lord before  
 Mine eyes has set the things to come;  
 I see them and complain no more.

Long years of heavy clogging crime,  
Black thunders over heaven's face,  
God's vengeance as God's self sublime,  
Hell widened for the human race—  
And then, the all-amending time!

Why should I weep when all will be—  
All marring sorrow, shaming sin—  
Fore-destined by the great decree  
To usher man's great glory in  
With Him the second of the Three?

I knew it ere I questioned him,  
Our sin could never leave him marred;  
He's all, we're nothing, and a whim  
For apple-eating, it were hard  
If that could make God's glory dim!

Why we are changed I hardly know,  
Plans infinite are hard to trace;  
One knowledge mine—its weight I throw;  
Right out in Satan's fiery face,  
To haunt him in his hell below!

Hear in your ears, oh thou that fell  
With no flesh-weight to drag thee low,  
A son of mine, God's son as well,  
Shall rule thee, and His Name shall bow  
The knees of them that writhe in hell!

"Like unto gods," you spoke and sneered;  
Hear me, a man, fling back the taunt,  
Not like to God—thou vision-bleared!—  
But truest God shall Adam vaunt  
His son, the Shiloh, demon feared!

And yet, O Eve! my heart is sore:  
I know not why, since Adam's sin  
No glory's sound from side to core,  
No joy but has its sorrow-twin,  
Pure ravishment is here no more.

Some crime red-mouthéd over all  
In Shiloh's days my sons will do,  
God hinted it, and then withal  
Great pain did seem to rend him through  
The bosom, and his tears did fall.



O Eve! if boys of ours should dare  
To lift mad hands against the man  
Our son, and God's Son, who shall bear  
(So God's dim hintings to me ran)  
Our sorrows with the flesh we wear!

It cannot be: from out his eyes  
Swift love will run through human hearts;  
The brutes that now our words despise  
Will heed him, and the desert parts  
Of earth will bloom like Paradise.

And yet, O Eve! thy husband's head  
Is bowed with other weights of woe,  
Hurled hard upon him when the red  
And reeking future rose to show  
The monstrous births to leave its bed!

The years come on when all the powers  
Of hell shall war against the good,  
And with hell-demons, sons of ours,  
Will fatten all the lusts of blood,  
Till sin have crammed the patient hours!

And Satan's reign will widen through  
The lands where God yet sits alone,  
And year by year will sin pursue  
And hunt God on, till every stone  
Has seen God beaten in its view!

But evermore and evermore  
Will Adam's shout ring round the land;  
Ring and resound on every shore  
Where Satan's hosts are known to stand,  
And hit him in his bosom's core:

Ring in his ears that Satan's God  
Is Adam's child, the lord of all,  
That sun and star, and rock and sod,  
And hell and each behind its wall  
Must shape them to a human nod.

For God is God, and Satan, he  
That sneered at God's new-moulded man,  
His own words hit him; "You will be  
As gods," the sneaking snake began;  
And man is God unendingly!

J. J. M.

## SECOND DAY OF WEDLOCK.

THE world went very slowly and uncomfortably with Mrs. —. She reappeared in her father's house at Plymouth, still almost a child, but pale and shaken with the sorrows of desolate womanhood; for a few weeks a deserted wife, in a few months a tearful widow. It was a point of conscience at this date for the white-ribbed cap to crush up in its skeleton carcase every lock of viduate hair. Mrs. — secluded all her golden ringlets, and seemed as if half her beauty had vanished with them.

She was really fond of her late husband, and felt his loss as deeply as it could be felt after so short an acquaintance, by a sweet, kindly, but somewhat shallow nature. Her grave, sad face was on the whole an honest index of her mind. Elastic nature rebelled at times, it is true. Hours of a brighter colour would now and then flit by; but a serious grief made such angel visits more like leaving cards than personal interviews.

Before the first year of her widowhood was quite gone, however, she was getting very tired of this moping life. Money she had, but that is of no great use with no way of spending it; and the world, which seems so unsympathetic in its sunshine, when mourners close the shutters against it, looks much better when they begin to peep at it through the cracks.

So it was that when Mrs. — received a kind letter from Aunt — telling her how all the social controversies at Bath had been composed under a master of the ceremonies, great and good alike to dance with ladies and game with gentlemen; what was the cut of the last sack, and the colour of the poplin which Mr. O'Flanagan had just brought her from Ireland; the composition of certain drops that were good for vapours, and, lastly, urging that the Bath waters were the very best things for her complaint—Mrs. — was not half so disinclined towards Bath, as when she left it in the previous year.

Aunt — was, what a recent poet has called, just in her twilight. She had danced and flirted for many years with exemplary propriety, and was gradually completing the circle of Bath existence, playing cards with increasing skill, and for more lengthened sittings. She was a pious woman according to the religion of her people, and gave all she won during Lent to the poor. She went regularly to the abbey, but considered it improper to think of religion out of church. Strong voices, indeed, were heard about this time in the city of waters—voices that shook the dry bones of the valley into living men, treating as crime or folly all Aunt — lived for, and consigning herself and friends to a place they were ill-mannered enough to mention; but owing to her excellent education and well-balanced mind, they produced no effect whatever on her.

Her virtues walked their narrow round,  
And made no pause and left no void.

In a place where scandal and slander reigned triumphant, she was always

good-natured, and it was really beautiful night after night, while the ladies and gentlemen she played with were bursting with rage and malice about each other's trumps, to observe her equanimity. Her envious companions accounted for it from the fact that she scarcely ever lost, but this was another instance of their ill-humour.

Lucy arriving, was immediately one of this select society. For a week or so the saddening memory of her late husband seemed to tell more in the place where she first met him; but ere long she could look at Jacob's ladder without a tear, and cut and shuffle in very promising pupilage at her aunt's card-table. She did not dance yet; but she went to church, and promenaded in the Pump-room afterwards, which was almost as good.

A gentleman joined them. "Good-morning, Miss Vivian; may I be introduced? Good-morning, madam—happy to make your acquaintance. Have you been long in this place? Hope you like it."

"I have only been here a few days, but it seems a pleasant place," Mrs. — answered.

"Beautiful city, charming society, fine church. Capital sermon the archdeacon gave us."

"Well," said Mrs. —, "the city seems gay enough, but really I thought the sermon very dull."

"Dull, my dear madam! Why the archdeacon is a great friend of your aunt's; and sermons ought to be dull—just to make a change. What should you like? A pretty Quaker girl got up and made a sermon in the Pump-room the other day, and even that was dull. My father used to say that once Dr. South gave a sermon in this abbey that made all the people laugh as if it were a pantomime, and the Bishop of London, who was down here drinking the waters, almost choked trying to keep his gravity!"

"Finish your story while you are about it, Captain Maylor," said Miss Vivian.

"That's the way she takes me up, Mrs. —. Well, the doctor and the bishop walked up and down the parade after service, when the bishop came to Dr. South and thanked him for his sermon; but added, 'May I be allowed to make an observation?'"

"Any observation of your lordship's will claim my best attention," South replied.

"Well, doctor," said the bishop, "if you will allow me to say it, I thought there was too much wit in your sermon this morning."

"Ah, my lord," said Dr. South, "that is too true! But you cannot conceive my temptation to it at times. God never sent your lordship wit."

"And what said the bishop to that?"

"Ah, dear madam, he received the compliment quite graciously. We do not expect to find the flowers of wit cut sharp off and piled up in shovel hats; so it's ten to one that he did not understand it."

"Then he wasn't so sharp as the Bishop of —, who read *Gulliver's Travels* all through, and then said he did not believe a word of it," interposed Mr. O'Flanagan.

"And there's the old vicar of Everton, at the Vineyards, he don't preach dull sermons," added Captain Maylor. "I saw a lady carried out who had laughed herself into hysterics, and two doctors were cutting her stays and trying to bring her round, in the court."

"Well, I should like to hear a man who preached like that," said Mrs. —. "Does he always preach there?"

"No, madam. He goes up and down the country, preaching anywhere that people will let him into a pulpit. I was told the other day that a Welsh clergyman on horseback overtook him one Sunday morning, walking hot and dusty on his way to a distant church, and began talking to him. Seeing he was a parson, he complained of the badness of the profession, telling Berridge he had made but half a guinea a sermon on the average of twenty-two years. Berridge looked up to him as to one great and prosperous; 'Ah, sir, I preach for a crown!'"

"Then, sir," said his clerical companion, giving his cob a kick and trotting off, "then, sir, you are a disgrace to your cloth!"

The conversation rattled on. At last it was agreed they should make a party and go and hear "The Ass of Everton," as he sometimes called himself. Aunt Bessy went sometimes to the Vineyards. She had been there when Whitfield opened the chapel, but did not think much of him. She went there sometimes because Lady B. C. took her. Why not that evening, and compare Berridge with the archdeacon? Aunt — and Mr. O'Flanagan, Mrs. — and Captain Maylor.

So they assembled at Miss Vivian's, and went to Lady Huntingdon's chapel. It was then a curious specimen of Strawberry Hill Gothic, and had called forth the admiration of Walpole himself. Three enormous stone eagles spread, formed desks for clerk, reader, and preacher at the back, and two front corners of a raised dais or throne, as they called it, whereon the elite might hear the gospel without any risk of contact with the vulgar. And in a corner was a small room, styled "The Closet," with glass doors and drawing blinds, into which Lady B. C. is said to have coaxed even bishops to hear some ostracised clergy who piqued their curiosity.

Our fashionable party was ushered up to the throne, quite ready to make the most of whatever might turn up in the way of diversion; but the whole thing was a failure. Berridge was not funny that night. Few people are when you bring friends to hear their wit. Some touches of comedy did not redeem a dulness resulting from a religious phraseology with which they were unfamiliar, and to which they attached no meaning whatsoever.

Captain Maylor felt very much like the showman whose dog has misbehaved. On their walk home he seemed doubly anxious to make up for the defects of their entertainment. He was full of life and anecdote, and when he and Mr. O'Flanagan took a late leave, all felt they had had a very pleasant evening.

"Nice little widow it is as ever I set my eyes on," said Mr. O'Flanagan, as he put his arm through Captain Maylor's. "I'm almost half sweet upon her already, and I will be quite if she stays here a trifle longer."

Captain Maylor had occasion just then to feel for his handkerchief, which got rid of a contact to which he suddenly felt an inexplicable dislike.

"And ye don't admire her, Captain Maylor?"

"O certainly I do," replied the captain. "She has been very unfortunate, you know, and is only just getting over her great trouble. You have heard how they conjured away her husband as soon as she was married, and sent him to die at Guadaloupe. He was here last year, and a very good fellow too."

"Unfortunate you call her! Oh, and it's just the unfortunateness that I'm always wishing would come my way. A pretty face, a handsome property, and a decent family connection. Sure as two negatives make an affirmative, such unfortunateness would make my fortune."

"Mr. O'Flanagan," said Captain Maylor, impatiently, "you know Miss Vivian more intimately than I do, and I suppose you assume that you may take any liberties with her friends."

"That's just so; and one of her most valued friends is no other than yourself, captain; and nobody wishes better for the aunt and niece than you and I. Good-night, we shall be sure to meet to-morrow, and I would not mind betting where."

Captain Maylor entered his lodgings. Mr. O'Flanagan laughed as he turned away, muttering—"A pretty boy! If he aint thinking of the widdy himself! and I'm mighty glad I gave him warning, so that it's not my fault if I should tread upon his corns."

It was unfortunate for Mr. O'Flanagan that a tailor, who had now for a long time provided him with appropriate costume, became rudely pressing for the settlement of his account. In fact, on the previous Saturday he had procured a writ to be served on Monday unless his bill should be paid that morning. And while Mr. O'Flanagan was shaving, his eye caught sight of a sheriff's officer suspiciously lounging about a shop window on the opposite side of the way. Mr. O'Flanagan knew that man better than he liked him, and resolved not to quit his lodgings that day—a resolution wise, perhaps, but full of evil omen, for where but at the rooms could he hope for any luck which might cast a sop to his Cerberus of a tailor?

The day passed very wearily; but he got a comfortable dinner sent in, and then he tried brandy. No friend called, so he talked to himself, and before he went to bed, really thought himself not bad company.

To-morrow came, the sheriff's officer was still there, and all diplomacy with the tailor ended in discomfiture.

On the fourth day he resolved to make a last effort. He sent for the tailor, and thus bespoke him: "Mr. Snooks, ye don't know what ye are doing; you're quite entirely ruining both me and yourself."

"I'm sorry, sir," said Snooks; "but the fact is you have promised and disappointed me so often, that I can't go on that way any longer. And I have bills coming in on me, sir."

"Ah, my good fellow, and in that same I can feel for you," interrupted O'Flanagan; "and now I want ye to stand my friend in a very delicate affair. Will ye bind your soul with a great oath not to divulge what I am going to



tell ye? I'm just on the point of marriage with a rich widow who'll pay all my debts, and keep her carriage; and here at the last moment ye are blighting my credit with her, as if I was an Irish fortune-hunter, not to mention what might happen while ye keep me out of her sight."

"Do you mean that you are going to marry the lady stopping at Miss Vivian's?" said Snooks.

"By my troth and it's the very same, and we are only waiting for the deeds and settlements that shall join her estates to my own."

"I only hope hers are in a better way than yours seem to be, sir," said the tailor. "However, if you will give me your signature to this paper, I will give you another month."

The penalty of failure was heavy, but O'Flanagan signed. The same day, got up regardless of expense in the height of the fashion, he knocked at Miss Vivian's door, and on reaching the drawing-room, found Captain Maylor holding silk while Mrs. — wound it.

Captain Maylor's hands were engaged in a way which deprived him of the honour of taking Mr. O'Flanagan's.

"Good-morning, Miss Vivian; good-morning, Mrs. —; and good-morning, captain. There's not a man in Bath that would not envy your office. Mrs. —, is he conducting himself properly in the task you impose upon him?"

"I can manage my work and prize my privilege," Captain Maylor replied, distantly.

Mrs. — had seen little of Irishmen, their high social qualities, their virtues, and their failings. She was not fortunate in the specimen before her; yet the joyous ring of his voice, the careless freedom of his manner, and his broad compliments, amused and pleased her. She was glad to see him, liked his stories, which were always witty, and often appropriate, and certainly gave him what is called encouragement. She had ample opportunities to observe, for Mr. O'Flanagan haunted the house. He tried to anticipate Captain Maylor's visits, and to sit him out. He knew too well to quarrel prematurely, but no doubt "the other lion thought the first a bore."

An extraordinary run of luck at passage recruited Mr. O'Flanagan's resources. He paid his tailor, and that fact becoming known, helped the patience of other creditors, enabling him to frequent the circle of gaiety in which Bath moved, without much fear of sudden interruption.

It soon became evident to Miss Vivian that her widowed niece had two very determined suitors. Captain Maylor she knew to be a man of property and character of good standing in his county. Of Mr. O'Flanagan she only knew that he was related to Lord Mountcoffe-house, and had estates in Ireland, mortgaged, they said; but how few ladies have any idea what a mortgage means, beyond some slight notion that it is disadvantageous?

Unfortunately for all parties, Mrs. — liked them both, without any decided preference for either; perhaps on the whole she preferred the genial Irishman. Captain Maylor was her aunt's favourite, and found the house always accessible. He had been too much interested in Mrs. —'s story before her present visit, and began to entertain for her an affection in no possible

respect mercenary. Certain it was that very soon the main object of both men's lives was to get each other out of the way.

"And ye weren't at the rooms, captain, last night?"

"No. I accompanied our friends to Sir Matthew Toper's ball, and a charming night we had of it."

"Ye made a mighty mistake then, let me tell you. The member for Calne is dead, and some one is wanted to take his seat, and every one was saying yourself was the only man. Admiral Scarthow is in charge of the whole affair; he was inquiring at your house as I came by, and sure enough I divined his business. Ye should have heard the flattering terms in which they were speaking of you."

O'Flanagan had succeeded. There was no intrinsic improbability in the case. Rumours must precede deputations. Captain Maylor soon took his leave, and put himself in Admiral Scarthow's way. He had not long to wait, as the first words spoken were, "O, Maylor, I'm glad to see you. So you are standing for Calne; I wish you success."

"Where did you hear that, admiral?" replied the captain.

"At the rooms last night; everybody was talking about it. I suppose you have got the nomination, and will need no help."

"But who told you, admiral? That is what I want to find out just now."

"Well, Wade was talking about it, and Carew, and I think they had it from O'Flanagan, and—either he had it from O'Brien or O'Brien from him; but what does it matter so as it's all right?"

"It matters this," said Captain Maylor, "that there's not a word of truth in it." The whole object of the story flashed upon him; the difficulty of any open remonstrance, and the importance of not enacting the disappointed candidate. O'Flanagan got four hours' courtship to himself, and made the most of them.

I am sorry to relate that Captain Maylor descended to a mean revenge. The disordered state of the O'Flanagan finance was no secret, and it had transpired that a tailor's bill had already interfered with his matrimonial schemes. Matters were come to that state that they made his rival very anxious for a quiet day or two, and thus he attained it.

Mr. O'Flanagan had breakfasted, and walked to the window for want of better occupation, when there he saw his old acquaintance waiting about, just as he had done in *re* Snooks. He looked at him long and steadily, meditating. "Is it Moses about that bill? or is it Viner for the wine and spirits? It can't be the shoemaker—no, I could pay him off. There's Pepperell for those three horses to be sure. And there's Abrahams for that seven hundred and sixty pounds bond, and that hundred and sixteen pounds to Virtue for snuff-boxes and canes; and there's that seventy-five guineas for the diamond ring that was gone in three days, and did me no good at all, and——" How long the mental soliloquy would have lasted is uncertain, for it was interrupted by another man whom O'Flanagan had never seen, but who seemed attracted to his old acquaintance by some freemasonry obscure to other eyes. He saw them look and seem to recognise each other, when after some conversation one took out a paper and showed it

to the other, who in return compared it with one in his possession. He then saw them apparently arrive at a mutual understanding, one retiring to one end of the street and the other to the other. If the prison doors had closed upon him, he could not have been more utterly a prisoner.

He sent for a lawyer, who had managed many of these little matters for him before. Mr. Deeds was from home, but would attend him the next morning. O'Flanagan rose early; the watchers were still there. It was midday before Mr. Deeds arrived.

He was soon put in possession of the facts of the case, and saw the difficulty. He could not open communications with any of the numerous creditors without knowing which was in a hostile attitude; and when he endeavoured to engage the men in talk, they told him very plainly their business was not with him.

Night fell. O'Flanagan observed opposite his house a man watching, and soon saw that it was his old acquaintance, who having been relieved during the day had come on for the night. He came downstairs in his dressing gown, and opened the parlour window, safe in the intervening area rails.

"Mr. Grasper," he said, in an under voice.

"Yes, sir," replied the myrmidon.

"Mr. Grasper, will you be good enough to inform me—stay—can ye catch a guinea, if I throw it to you wrapped up in a bit of paper? There—and you are welcome as a friend, with whom I have had dealings before. Can you be good enough to inform me who is persecuting me now?"

"Well, sir, I don't know as any one is a persecuting of you."

"Not persecuting me! and ye are watching me night and day, that I can't set foot outside my door; and what is it? who is my great enemy?"

"I never knowed as you had an enemy in the world, sir."

"Oh, will ye drive me out of my wits, ye vagabond? You've got a writ against me, and who is it?"

"I've got nothing against you that I knows of, sir."

"Sure then, what for is it that ye are always all night and all day watching me like a terrier at a rat hole, that I can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, for thinking what ye may be after?"

"This is what it's for, sir; those as employs me and pays me says—'You go stop where I put you, as you may be wanted, and don't you answer no questions.' But when you pays me of course I answers you."

O'Flanagan retired to rest puzzled, but by no means reassured. At last the maddening thought crossed him—suppose it's all a trick of Captain Maylor's to cheat me of my impending marriage!

He resolved to risk all, and next day sallied forth in high feather. The man was still there, but his supposed colleague was not. He touched his hat, and offered no interruption. Struggling with a rage he endeavoured to suppress, and beaten at his own tactics, he went directly to Miss Vivian's door.

Meantime a conversation had taken place one evening between Lucy and her aunt.

"I've no right to counsel you now, dear Lucy; but do you know I am afraid we shall get into trouble with your two cavaliers?"

"I hope not," said Mrs. —, "for it is such fun to see them watching each other like cocks, wanting an excuse for fighting, which they cannot find."

"That's just what I fear that they will find some day," replied Miss Vivian; "and my Lucy would not like to be the subject of a duel."

"O no, aunt; but you don't really think there is danger of anything so horrible?"

"Forewarned, forearmed, at any rate," said her aunt. "They speak pretty fairly, but I don't like their looks, and that makes me wish you to be cautious."

"Thank you, dear aunt, I will be; but it is so very amusing, and you know neither of them has spoken yet, and I don't think I need make up my mind until one does. Besides, Mr. O'Flanagan has not been here for three or four days, and perhaps he has left the field."

"Not he!" replied Miss Vivian, "though from all I hear I should not be sorry if he did. They say he is deep in debt, and no doubt would like you to pay for him."

Next day Captain Maylor was, as usual, at his devotions, when Mr O'Flanagan made his appearance. "Good-morning, Miss Vivian; good-morning, madam; good-morning, Captain Maylor. Mighty glad to see you all again."

"We thought we had quite lost you," said Miss Vivian. "Captain Maylor was asking what had become of you."

"Sure and I was taken very bad on Tuesday night, after I left you, ladies, and I have not been able to leave my house since that day."

"O, indeed, you were really taken. I am sorry to hear it," said the captain.

"Captain," said O'Flanagan, firing up at last, "I was not taken at all, and you are not sorry at all, and by the Lord ye shall answer me for that word when the time is convenient."

"I beg your pardon a thousand times. I thought you said you had been taken."

"I said I was taken *bad*, captain, and had the doctor, and gave him a guinea, I did, and was better for his advice, and for the future time I will beg ye to avoid insinuations which you have no right to make whatsoever."

Captain Maylor took no more notice of this outbreak; but the hatred which settled on O'Flanagan's face alarmed Mrs. —, and she resolved, at once, to act on her aunt's advice by bowing out the Irishman, and accepting the very marked attentions of the captain.

Courtships have such a family likeness, that few ladies, familiar with the principles and practice of a first, will find much left to be elucidated by a second. If Mrs. —'s had a fault, it was that all went too easy. There were no obstacles to overcome, no doubts, no fears, no tremulous moments, no ages of feeling condensed into an hour. They danced all night, and played cards to rest themselves. They rode or walked together in the morning. They were very fond of each other, and their horizons were limited to much the same distance. A happy pair before marriage, with hopes sweet, though moderate, and every prospect of complete fulfilment.

To this peace O'Flanagan's departure from Bath contributed. He had got

the rumour well circulated that he was going to marry the widow, and some of his creditors found therein an element of hope. As it became evident to the public that another was the favoured suitor, applications for money became more numerous and pressing. He thought, under all the circumstances, that a change of air might do him good.

Thus all things prospered. The mourning was laid aside, and within two years of her first unfortunate marriage, the bride stood at the altar by Captain Maylor, more beautiful and more completely self-approving in her choice than when she passed the same ordeal at Plymouth. They had taken and furnished an elegant house in Queen Square, and a new chariot made its first journey in conveying bride and bridegroom from the abbey to their home.

This journey was not altogether without its adventure. As soon as the bride had entered the carriage a note was put into Captain Maylor's hand by some bystander. The captain was too much engrossed by his situation to open it then. They proceeded homeward and arrived.

The bride retired to prepare for the wedding feast. The bridegroom, left alone, opened the letter so inopportunistically given him. To judge by his altered countenance the contents were not agreeable. While he stood with the letter in his hand the bride returned from her chamber, joyous and confident in the husband of her choice.

"My dear Charles," she exclaimed, "what is the matter—something is wrong; it's that letter the man gave you? What is it? O tell me! Nothing must trouble you to-day."

"Dear love," said the captain, "we cannot make bargains with trouble; but nothing shall trouble me to-day. We will be as happy as a king and queen—it is a matter soon settled."

"But what is it, Charles?—do tell me. All your troubles are mine now; you cannot help it, you must tell me."

"I would tell you anything I could," said the captain, beginning to flounder in the mire of explanations; "but really it's not a matter a lady should wish to hear about. It's quite in confidence, and I could not tell even my dearest wife."

"I'm sorry we begin with confidences which we cannot share. It's a lady's confidence, of course. I dare say there's reason enough for keeping it from me!"

An indignant disavowal burned in the captain's heart; but he had courage to suppress it, and merely said, "I will show you the letter and explain the whole affair to-morrow; but I must implore you to let it alone for this day."

Mrs. Maylor's spirit was up, however. She must see the letter that very day—she would not hear reason—she would not give him a kiss—she would know who the woman was—she wept and went up to her room—and her husband, so far from following her, left the house, and was gone for two hours.

The evening passed in festivities. It was noticed that neither bride nor bridegroom looked happy; and poor Mrs. Maylor senior, the captain's widowed mother, after vainly endeavouring to cheer and reassure her daughter-in-law, and exonerate her son, seemed fairly to give it up.



"Time and the hour runs through the blackest day;" wedding days included, if necessary. The day after comes in due course. The bride awoke, and found herself alone.

Her lady's-maid knew nothing.

The footman did not hear his master go out.

Mrs. Maylor, the mother, was as much alarmed as Mrs. Maylor, the wife. No one could give any clue to the disappearance.

From eight to ten o'clock Captain Maylor was searched for wherever there seemed a chance that he could have gone, under the supposed influence of pique or vexation.

At half-past ten a professional-looking gentleman inquired for Mrs. Maylor senior. He had news to tell, and preferred the mother to the wife.

"I am grieved, dear madam, to be the bearer of painful intelligence about your son."

The mother seized his arm convulsively. "He is not drowned! He has not killed himself!"

"No, madam. I was called up early this morning to attend a gentleman who had been severely wounded in a duel. Would that my services could have availed more. Captain Maylor had received a sword cut, which severed the arteries of his arm, and sunk rapidly from loss of blood. It was impossible to do anything to arrest the hæmorrhage, as the lesion was in the arm-pit. Captain Maylor appears to have received the challenge yesterday,—and he has fallen.

Dr. Amby here handed to Mrs. Maylor a paper, which the dying man put into his hands. It read as follows:—

"CAPTAIN MAYLOR,—I told you I would, at the fitting time, call you to account for your foul play in cheating me of the affections of a lady with whom was bound up all my happiness in life; and now I am under a great oath that you shall never keep the game that you have got by a mean, base juggle, such as there is not another officer in the service would disgrace himself by.

"And now Colonel Mauleverer will wait for your answer at his lodgings, 24, Goy-street, as, mayhap, if he came to you this day ye might contrive to cheat me of my revenge. I shall be at the Monument, Lansdown, at six to-morrow morning, and right glad to take from you the satisfaction of a gentleman.

"I remain, sir,

"Your humble servant

"P. O'FLANAGAN."

Scrawled in pencil under this were the words:—"Dearest, forgive me!"

V. E.

## TO AND THROUGH THE ISLE OF DOGS.

THE Blackwall Railway must be used for pleasure as well as business. Blackwall shares whitebait with Greenwich, and yachting-men run down to embark at the Brunswick Pier; but no other London line has so little of the look of "holiday traffic" about it. Throughout its length it is as severely business-like as a coalpit tramroad, and almost as grimy. No ornament is wasted on its Fenchurch-street Terminus, to begin with. Half a dozen cabs almost fill the little open space it fronts, and its façade is of the least florid order of Pointless architecture. Space is everywhere economised. Curt notifications of "No Admittance" frown over its narrow egress portals, and through equally cramped ingress doorways, which almost touch the others, the passenger finds his way into booking-offices not much larger than good-sized packing-cases. I am inclined to believe that the ticket-clerks' pigeon-holes are smaller than elsewhere, and only appear of the normal size through contrast with the surrounding contractedness. At any rate, the clerks seem to be chosen with a view to the scanty room they can be accommodated with, and the planking of the cells in which the little hermits are enclosed—drearily lonely, with fresh faces ever flowing past them—are certainly grained and clouded with blacker dirt and more adhesive grease than can be found on the boards of any similar hermitages. The steps that lead up to the platforms are dark and narrow. When a train comes in between a couple of the platforms, it lies jammed like a tier of ships in dock; and the engine that brought it in has to remain sulking against the buffers until another engine has panted away with the carriages once more. As passengers tumble out of them on one side, passengers tumble into them on the other. There is not much waiting at the Fenchurch-street Terminus. Time is money with most of the people who frequent it, and, if you do lose your train, you must find your consolatory entertainment in perusing the posters with which the gloomy shed is tapestried, and listening to the newsboys who patrol it, shrilly advertising, "*Punch, Fun, Judy, and the Tommy'-ock.*"

The majority of your fellow-passengers are sure to be seafaring men, shipping-clerks, emigrants, or people in some way or other connected with the Great Deep or the shallower current of the River. Most of these personages are addicted to the mastication of tobacco. An American traveller on the Blackwall line must marvel at the fastidious strictures which have been made by English tourists on that habit as practised on the railroads of his native country. The Blackwall chewer, however, does not indulge in the long-range artillery-practice of his Transatlantic brother. Ever and anon he opens his knees like the points of a pair of compasses, and deposits the mahogany-hued result just behind his still-closed heels with the solemn thud and splash of the first drop of a thunder-shower. The nominative and objective of the third personal pronoun feminine are heavily worked in the course of a railway journey to or from Blackwall. The conversation bristles with "shes" and "hers." Ships that have sailed or are about to sail, ships that have not been heard of, or have just been docked, that were seen

coming up the river last night, or brought up this morning in the Hope, ships building, ships repairing, ships loading, form the staple of the talk: some of them being lauded as if lovers were chanting their mistresses' praises in amæbean strains, or spoken of with the familiar affection of a middle-aged husband not disposed to rhapsodize, but yet proud of the 'cuteness and coziness of his "old woman;" and others having their characters picked to pieces just as if they were human fair ones exposed to the moral dissection of a conclave of old maids.

It is amusing to find how soon the emigrants have acquired the *esprit-de-craft*. They trumpet the vessels they have selected, they depreciate the merits of other ships on the berth for the same ports, as authoritatively as if they had sailed many a voyage in both. Of nautical technicalities, more or less accurately employed, they are even more lavish than the mariners proper; and they swagger also a good deal more than usually quietly-behaved Jack. They take a pride in defying shore-going conventionalisms, and fancy themselves Livingstones with a dash of the bold buccaneer. One cannot help smiling at the thought of the draggle-tailed appearance their stagy nautical get-up will present in a day or two—of how they will be staggering to the side with swimming brain, tottering feet, and nerveless fingers, and wishing they had courage to end their misery by a suicidal plunge into the wild waters whose ceaseless swirl but aggravates their nausea; lying about on the spars, as log-like, or crying for basins in their bunks, "like a sick girl," long before they are out of the Channel;—of the eagerness with which they will rush ashore (hoping that something may happen to prevent them, without shame to their manhood, from ever embarking again) when the ship calls in at Plymouth, and of the humiliating keenness with which they will feel the Plymouth small boys' sarcasm, "Messmate, how many days out from Blackwall?" shouted after them as they straggle about the town with still unsteady gait.

The characters of officers as well as ships are freely discussed in a Black-wall train. One rugged first-mate tells his *vis-à-vis* fellow, with a chuckle, how the "Betsy Jane" always missed stays when his smart young skipper tried to put her about, whilst *he* could manage her without turning the other watch out, if the passengers would bear a hand. "Ought to be able to handle 'Betsy Jane' better," the gruff old sea-dog adds with intense enjoyment of his joke, "for he married her—owner's son-in-law, you know." His *vis-à-vis* caps his story with one about *his* "old man," who had his wife aboard last voyage, and was for ever "touching" everywhere. "I s'pose she wanted her petticoats mangled," the misogynist mariner growls with deep disgust. Meanwhile a chubby young second mate, who, in spite of the sun-and-spray-dimmed house-flag on his cap, and the bronze that has supervened upon his English rosiness, looks very much like Cupid starting for his first voyage in a gilt-buttoned peajacket, is, *per contra*, amusing his companion with jests on his last chief officer—an importation from the coasting-trade, who had never made the Australian voyage before (which Cupid has made a dozen times), and was always entering "hurricanes" in the log-book when it blew a capful between the Cape and Sydney Heads.

The freedom with which these nautical men cut into one another's conver-

sation, and the easy abruptness with which they back 'out of it, are noteworthy features in the contemporaneous dialogues. A Poplar shipwright is complaining to a steamer's steward that there is no "new work" going nor "old work nayther" at his yard. His friend reminds him that he had a job on the "Two Brothers," and proceeds to state that she looks as good as new after her repairs, as he can say, for "Bill's gone out in her, third;" and he has just bidden Bill good-bye at Gravesend. "Seen anything of the ship 'Templar?'" briefly interjects a little close-shaven man in black, who, but for his oil-skinned cap, and a certain accent of command in his clear blue eye and *staccato* voice, would look more like a theatrical "super" than a merchant captain. "No, sir," answers the steward, without looking round, and in an unaltered tone, just as if it were part of the chronicle into which he has plunged of "our boat's" performances during her last run to "*Rowterdam*;" and in the same unbroken fashion the skipper continues his adverse argument on double topsails into which he has been provoked by the two first mates' approval of the same.

If the Blackwall line looks business-like within the shed, still more so does it look outside. The train runs past vast wool warehouses, inscribed with letters almost as tall as ranks of French infantry; goods depôts, yawning above a maze of cross-rails and turn-tables, and announcing entrances on the level half-a-dozen streets off; and long lines of tarpaulin-covered trucks and waggons, whose initials show that they have congregated there from the far west and the still more distant north. Out of the grey sea of smoke that eddies above mile-wide reefs of begrimed and battered chimney-pots on every side, spring lighthouse-like chimney stalks, flaunting black flags of defiance to parliament as they belch forth their caliginous coils. Here a Nautical Academy advertises itself on a housetop with a board like a brewer's. There you read on a gable-end that "Christ Church Schools, Supported by Voluntary Contributions," are held in the arches over which you are rumbling. There is a slight difference between Christ Church arches and Eton's "antique towers," although *they*, too, were originally intended for "poor and indigent boys." Mediæval charity was a good deal more tasteful, at any rate, than modern.

Some of the Blackwall Railway stations are as gloomy as these singular "groves of Academe." The booking-office is a murky vaulted cellar, and when the passenger has reached the top of the filthy cellar stairs, he finds himself in a tiny wooden Dutch oven, which can be traversed in half a dozen strides, but which he is afraid to traverse, lest he should knock fellow passengers off the narrow shelf which does duty for platform. The same economical architecture characterises the arches which span the ditch-like side lanes over which the railway straddles. Their battlements are of rusty, corrugated metal, that looks as if it had been picked up cheap in a ship-breaker's yard.

The glimpses the Blackwall-bound traveller catches of Rosemary-lane, Cable-street, and the Back-road are dreary enough, but those sewer-like lanes running into them are inexpressibly dismal. It is impossible to believe that their stagnant atmosphere was ever stirred and purified by a hearty,

innocent laugh. How *can* people be happy in such holes? As to being virtuous, it seems ridiculous to entertain the thought. The inhabitants crawl about like vermin, and if they prey like vermin, are they *morally* responsible for acting according to the nature into which they have been born and bred? Of course, for its own protection, society is obliged to hold them legally responsible; but would not society's "selfishness" be more "enlightened" if it attacked the cause as well as the effect? Whilst such dwellings exist, it is as natural that there should be crime as that there should be cholera. The squalid haul that the policeman drags into the police-dock from such districts affects one like the carcases and skeletons nailed upon a gamekeeper's gable. It was necessary that the vermin should be punished, but still it seems hard that they should be punished for merely following the instincts of their kind. "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the might of my power?" exclaimed Nebuchadnezzar, as he walked on the roof of his palace; and, for a punishment, he had to eat grass like an ox, and his nails were turned into talons. If any one man could be made accountable for the building of the greater part of *our* great Babylon—that is seen from the Blackwall Railway, he would not be likely to boast of his achievement; but bestial appetites and rapacious claws would be a fitly symbolical retribution for the condition into which he had reduced his tenants. A tawny African desert strewn with bleaching bones would not be so depressing a spectacle as the grimy wilderness of jumbled roofs, staggering chimney-stacks, and blind or blinking windows, athwart which the Blackwall Railway cuts at the commencement of its career. The mortar in which the shattered chimney-pots stand awry is black and cracked like desiccated mud. A pall of soot is spread over the broken tiles and the crumbling rafters that peep out between. The small windows have the look of eyes clouded by cataract, or damaged in fight. Supplementary stories of slanting slate—not much bigger than middle-sized house-cisterns—have been added to tottering hovels swarming with life, and those tanks are "family-homes!" That the trains at Stepney Junction, in a single week, should have made mangled corpses of two wretched suicides, weary of existence in Ratcliff, is a grim fact to call to mind when you roll over the rails splashed with their blood; but, save as to the mode of death selected, you can scarcely think the fact wonderful.

The cramped, squat streets of yellow brick into which the waste of smoke-furred red brick merges, even Mr. Robins would scarcely have ventured to describe as "highly eligible riverside residences;" but they seem cheerful in comparison. Some of them have little gardens rather bigger than hearthrugs; the palings are smothered with scarlet-runners; a sunflower, looking as broad as a warmingpan, blazes in the teatray-like middle bed; and a pert little flagstaff perks itself up, like the horn on a baby caterpillar's tail, in front of the doll's "arbour" at the bottom.

It is hard to say whether the churches that lift their dingy towers above the cloudy chaos are inspiring or otherwise. They give proof of good intentions, but, planted where they are, their dull grey is suggestive of salt that has lost its savour. At any rate, the festering mass around seems



satirically out of proportion to their corning power. The lofty-sparred ships, whose flags are seen flaunting over the house-tops on the right, produce a similarly harsh sense of contrast. They tell of boundless wealth, invincible enterprise, and yet they are laden and unladen by the miserable tenants of the filthy warren that sprawls to the foot of the jealously dead and towering dock wall.

A nearer sight is soon obtained of vessels. The train thunders along a pier-like bridge, roofed and half walled with corrugated zinc. In the basin beneath there is a jumble of lighters, barges, and unloading brigs and barques. Skipful after skipful of coals ceaselessly swings up from the colliers' holds and rattles down the shoots into the gaping mouths of the hippopotamus-like craft moored alongside. Coal is heaped high upon the wharfs, and built up in huge blocks into Cyclopean walls. Lime lies in piles like snowdrifts. Rusty rails and "chairs," pig iron and rod iron, are being stacked with an infernal clash and jangle. Table-lands of ready-broken road-metal stretch along the water-side, as symmetrically flattened and sloped as if a neat Titan had run his hand along their tops and down their sides. Floating timber is rocking and jostling in the muddy waters. Barges and billyboys, truss-laden almost up to their cross-trees, grind against the quays like haystacks and corn-ricks that some great flood has sent adrift.

A fresher breeze blows from the river when the line gets off its arches. The boundary walls grow dank as well as dark. Ribbons and patches of marshy green have invaded the black ballasting, and the spare pairs of wheels that are littered about are richly red with rust. Grass even grows between the white stones of the road that separates the line from the vast warehouses of the West India Import Dock. A flag or two may be seen fluttering beyond, a waggon or two are waiting in the road; but otherwise there is no outward and visible sign of the docks' inward and emmet-like bustle. Furlong after furlong the drab pile stretches, story above story it rises; but the slate-coloured doors are closed, and seen from the outside it looks far more like the sealed sepulchre than the business place of a gigantic commerce. The idle cranes on the top stories stretch out their arms like Zeresh gibbets waiting for their Mordecais or Hamans.

Again, however, the line runs into the very midst of ships. A green-painted clipper puts her gilt nose over the wall; her slanting hawse-holes reminding one of the scared eyes of a horse that refuses to take the fence up to which it has been spurred. You might fancy that you were running stem on into the river, but the train brings up instead in the dingy crepuscular rifle gallery dignified with the name of the Blackwall Terminus.

A step takes you out on the Brunswick Pier, and if you find that you have lost your boat, you are rather puzzled what to do with yourself whilst waiting for the next.

I found myself in that predicament the other day. Blackwall Reach was almost bare of shipping. A rusty collier brig, with sails patched like her crew's breeches, was coming round the bend. Two or three little steamers with red funnels were anchored lower down. Bugsby's Marshes opposite were not an exhilarating prospect, and when the trap staircases that lead

down to the landing-stages have been inspected and discovered to be empty, the resources of the pier proper are exhausted.

Fortunately the East India Docks are just round the corner, and there you may see clustered in scores some of the finest ships that enter the port of London. The "bustling river" impresses foreigners, but in the docks they must get a more adequate notion of the magnitude of London trade. Long reaches of the river are often not bustling, and where it is most bustling, the finest specimens of its sailing craft, at least, are not to be seen, except singly when warping into or out of dock. But in the docks they lie side by side in a crowded congress of Leviathans, assembled, like the Pan-Anglican Synod, from all quarters of the globe, with freight a good deal more in keeping with the distance it has been carried. It is like peeping into a mine to glance down into their dim cavernous holds, from which bale after bale, crate after crate, barrel after barrel, comes up in bewildering continuity. You lose yourself whilst wandering about these floating villages. The very "dust bins" at the corners of the East India Docks are good-sized cottages. Almost all the vessels in these docks have a crack look about them. The East India Docks are the Quartier St. Germain of the Thames, where aristocratic shipping congregates. Here lies a frigate-built East Indiaman or Australian liner—the most picturesque large sailing ship afloat—with her graceful bow, in which beauty has not been sacrificed to speed, and yet the speed has been secured; her jib-boom bent downwards like a bow, her white streak, her open ports, her yards as square, her rigging as trim as a man-of-war's. Alongside lies a Black Ball liner, whose black sides give her the look of a magnified gondola, and whose cutwater is as sharp as a steamer's. A little farther on they are mooring an American clipper, with still more raking masts, still heavier, wider yards, and a white eagle sprawling on her stern. And beyond a knot of loungers are passing admiring comments on the just-arrived Greenock tea-ship that has won the great tea-race. The flyer's wings are folded, and she floats as proudly as a black swan at rest, looking as if she quite understood all the praise lavished on her, and felt that she richly deserved it.

But when I had wandered through the docks, I had still time upon my hands. A sudden thought struck me—I would explore the Isle of Dogs. The name is a household word to all Cockneys—they have heard it played upon scores of times in punning pantomimes; but how many of them know anything of its local habitation beyond the glimpse that may be got of its fringe from a Gravesend or a Margate boat? No one, except on occasion of a great ship-launch, would think of going to the Isle of Dogs for pleasure, and great ship-launches unfortunately do not take place there now. The artisans who used to swarm to it for business from Poplar and East Greenwich frequent it now in sadly diminished flocks. At its busiest time it was a terra incognita to the vast majority of Londoners: now it possesses in addition the painful interest of being comparatively deserted by its whilom flourishing denizens. I set out for a walk round it, although within earshot of railway-whistles and almost within eyeshot of St. Paul's, with a prose-dashed feeling of the poetry that must affect a visitant of ruined cities buried in American forests.

On the right rose the dead wall of the West India Docks, with little black huts showing at regular intervals above, furnished with pulley-wheels, as if inhabited by marsh-hermits who so hauled up their supplies. I crossed white drawbridges ridged with high metal flanges to keep crossing waggons in the middle. On the left rolled the almost vacant reach of river; on the right masts rose above brick walls, looking as land-sprung as park-trees; and vessels and timber floated in lanky artificial lochs. I passed "Lloyd's Proving Range," a long lofty gallery of rusty corrugated iron, bristled with scolloped pinnacles; and paced the deserted streets of Cubitt Town.

I once heard a humorous Kentish rustic describing a part of Maidstone as a locality which the Creator had "made o' Saturday night, and so he left it unfinished." I was forcibly reminded of that somewhat bold description whilst wandering through Cubitt Town. The houses are of the normal squat, flimsy, featureless class which finds favour with the "cheap builders" of London; but suddenly every pretence at pavement vanishes, the post of the "doctor's" red lamp at the corner stands lonely as Eddystone lighthouse, and the street runs into marsh, on which horses, with burs in their manes, are fattening themselves for the knacker's yard, mud-streaked little pigs are squeakingly complaining of the bites which stray mangy dogs persist in taking at their by no means too plump behinds, and patriarchally-bearded Billygoats, big-uddered Nannygoats, and frisky kids are nosing and vaulting amidst sherds of yellow pottery. In the distance tower truncated pyramids of red and yellow brick, with grey haze wreathing over them. Nearer at hand are wastes of hummocked land, laked with pools of stagnant, scummily-irised water, which the bigger small boys of the place have converted into artillery ranges; more diminutive brethren being the whimpering targets for their hot fire of oyster shells.

The grey stone church, the red and yellow brick schools, are almost the only wholesome-looking buildings in the town. Most of the houses look like decaying mushrooms. There is an appalling proportion both of private dwellings and of shops "To Let;" the lower windows of the former being roughly boarded up to exclude gratuitous tenants. Public-houses are plentiful, but the dinginess which previous thronging custom has brought upon them stands out with dismal prominence in their present desolation. Workmen who can get no work, unshorn and clad in dirty duck and greasy corduroy, lounge about in knots of three and four, drearily moping, still more drearily joking as to the probabilities of the passing stranger's standing an eleemosynary pint. The puff of a steam-engine, the rattle of a hammer, are sounds as rare as welcome. Again and again the road is fringed with a long range of workshops, through the starred holes of whose broken windows no bustle can be seen, no clank of tools, no hum of voices comes. Broad, white-lettered black boards above their portals announce "These Desirable Premises to be Sold or Let on lease."

Between two such establishments a narrow street runs down to a deserted pier. The green grass is fast covering the black clinkers with which it is paved. At the bottom a glimpse may be got of a deserted shipyard. It is a forest of bare poles. On the pebbly "hard" into which it slopes lies a dis-

masted black barge—her cracked, sprawling sideboard looking like the broken fin of a dead, stranded whale. That may be taken as the type of the shipyards of the Isle of Dogs at present. I saw only two vessels shored up for repairs; abnormal quiet reigns even in the ship-breaker's yard, littered with sea-greened copper, fractured spars, sun-blistered planks, and noseless, armless figure-heads. Other trades, however, seem still to thrive in the Isle of Dogs, and perfume its atmosphere with a strange medley of malodour. Were it not for the penetrating scent of abundant tar, the nose would collapse under the infliction of the horribly mingled stinks of rancid grease, bilgewater, and mysteriously anonymous "chemicals." "Family Night Lights" have a great factory all to themselves in Millwall. As you follow the river's curve, you pass all kinds of works—some of them so big that their buildings have to be linked on to one another with rhubarb-coloured bridges running above the roadway. Bæotian fatness broods in the air around this oil mill. The steam corn mill next to it is furred with flour in streaks like rain-furrowed whitewash. Above this wall peeps a chaos of blighted-pumpkin-like boilers and pipes carefully wrapped in filthy, shaggy swathing. Through the wall runs a hose, swelling like an angry snake as the stream which the turncock in mufti has just supplied from the plug outside rushes through it. Just inside that wall a lofty chimney-stalk springs up like a blasted Californian pine, seemingly quite cut off from the works to whose ill-humours it gives vent. The smoky, dumpy cones of a pottery come next, pitched higgledy-piggledy amongst ash-heaps, rain-pools, clay-piles, and avalanches of smashed pipkins. The pottery cones are cracked, but they seem to be chuckling over the thought that if they tumble, they will not have so far to fall as their tall neighbours, some of which are also cracked, and others prophylactically hooped like barrels—a precaution which gives them the aspect of vastly-magnified bamboos. In the midst of fuming chimney-stalks, rumbling wheels, and panting engines, is interposed the cool, quiet contrast of a stone-yard; with moist numbered blocks piled one upon another, and arranged in avenues, like "Druidical remains."

I have said that no one would dream of going to the Isle of Dogs for pleasure; but, natheless, I found "villas" there; enclosed in smart palisades, skirted with grass-plats and fringed with little trees and shrubs. Apparently their builder soon repented of his enterprise, for one of the small number can only boast of a basement, and moulders a ready-made ruin above its shaggy lawn. Noble Greenwich Hospital opposite, backed by its wooded hill, looks pityingly across at the pretentious row that dares, perched on the margin of a marsh, to assume Cockney architectural airs in face of its time-mellowed domes and colonnades.

In spite of its frill of works, the Isle of Dogs still looks a marsh. Blind alleys between the works are blocked with river-wall: where little lanes open on the river, the island seems to have sprung a leak, and one expects the water to rush in. Mist hangs about the flat, creeping hither and thither like visible ague: the houses look as if they had caught cold through not changing their wet stockings. The one omnibus which has come to an irresolute stand-still in the miry main street of Millwall, "like one who hath

been led astray," seems to have wandered from some slug-haunted old yard in which superannuated "busses" are laid up in mildewed ordinary. The two policemen look equally blue-mouldy, and pine for the far-off beats in which more fortunate brethren behold cooks' faces beaming like rising suns between area rails. The hobbydehoy roughs who loaf out amongst the puddles have something alligator-like in their moist lankiness. The cheap periodicals in the one or two little shops, which satisfy the island's thirst for literature, appear damper than when they came fresh from the press a month ago. "Champagne Charley" and the "Three Jolly Dogs" droop alongside them in lugubriously limp coarse woodcuts, hydropathically cured of all their fastness. Jolly Dogs in the Isle of Dogs seem as much out of their element as Clown, Harlequin, and Pantaloon at a Methodist class-meeting.

The Isle of Dogs is said to be so called because when our monarchs hunted in the Forest of Essex, and lived at Greenwich, their hounds were kennelled for convenience' sake in the marshy horseshoe opposite. This derivation, doubtless, will be set aside by future etymologists. They will pronounce the royal pack a myth invented to account for the corruption of the Isle of *Docks* into the Isle of *Dogs*. In a few generations most probably the whilom marsh will have been "revindicated" by the water, in the shape of a system of gate-locked lakes. As you wander on towards Limehouse, you cross the inlet of the new Docks, its lead-coloured brickwork as yet unfurred with slime; and see their basins, so soon to be converted into mud-soup, loneliness stretching far inland and looking almost limpid as the sunlight dimples their merely wind-stirred ripples. On one side of them spreads a pitted chaos, in which clayey navvies are plying the pick and spade, and mire-encrusted ballast-waggons are rumbling along rough, rusty, narrow-gauge rails, with ends turned up like *sabot* toes.

More white drawbridges—more long reaches of dead wall, through whose posterns greasy dock-labourers are listlessly trooping back to work—a saccharine scent in the air as if a colony of Titan housewives had assembled to make jam in company. The circuit of the island is completed—here are the West India Docks once more. A portal, decorated with a ship with struck topmasts carved in stone, gives ingress to their courts and quays. Upon the bulwarks of the ships moored along the quays loll, in keeping with the docks' speciality, an unusual number of black mariners, rolling their white eyeballs, and showing their white teeth, like a cloud's silver lining, as they bask, sheltered from the wind, in grinning enjoyment of the grateful autumn sunlight. More negro sailors are clustered about the cosmopolitanly patronised public just outside the docks; but the wind is blowing freshly there; and, heedless of the landlord's staringly painted injunction to his customers "not to sit upon the steps," the poor Ethiops crouch upon his portico, stamping their feet and tucking their chilled hands into their armpits, eyeing with benumbed wonder and envy the Norwegian sailors from the Timber Dock, who are rollicking over shandygaff in their unbuttoned shirt-sleeves, and punctuating with melancholy *yab-yabs* the merry confusion of tongues that rages around, as they think regretfully of stifling Kingston.

RICHARD ROWE.



## WHICH WILL SHE MARRY?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

### CHAPTER I.

"SLIGHTED love," saith the poet, "is sair to bide;" and the truth of the saying had been experienced by Miss Arabella Spence during the winter of 185-, when Mr. Patrick Playfair was prosecuting his courtship of Miss Anne Hathorn; a courtship which we have seen had a happy issue, so far as principals were concerned.\*

Arabella had read both in cynical novels and in Scripture, that the heart of man is very foolish and vain; but human sentiments are perverse. It is to no purpose that we assure ourselves that riches are dross, that fame is but the breath of fools, that knaves often gather wealth and reputation, while honest and intelligent people, like ourselves, remain in obscurity; still, on we go with the unphilosophic crowd, pleased when we are properly flattered and well paid, out of temper when our vanity is trodden upon, or our Christmas bills heavier than we expected.

Luckily for Arabella, the sentiments are more obedient to the physical constitution than to any dictum of the intellect, even though the dictum be, unlike hers, independent of authority; for she was blessed with a healthful temperament which soon throws off grief, and quickly hopes again. Her feelings were not profound, which was probably so much the better for herself, and quite as well for other people, as they were none the less likely to have been correct. She had said nothing about her love disappointment to her mother, for fear of distressing her.

Aunt Jane had taken kindly to her niece. It was pleasant to have a young, pretty, and good-natured face beside her. Arabella had been very useful. She had rung bells, brought footstools, read aloud books which she did not understand, and when Aunt Jane was testy she had neither shown nor felt any irritation in return. She now reaped the benefit of this practical wisdom. The old lady, who was clever and had seen a good deal of the world, gave her niece advice in various little matters, which had an improving effect upon her externally; and when the day of her return to Barnston arrived, her aunt kissed her affectionately, slipped a little box into her hand, and said that she must spend a month or two in Nework next winter.

The box was found to contain an old-fashioned, but very handsome, necklace, ditto, ditto, bracelet, and ditto, ditto, diamond ring, and a ten-pound note. Had these little gifts been made to Arabella at the very time of her disappointment, they would have brought little consolation, but coming after an interval of two months, she received them as one receives a dividend on a debt written off as bad in one's books. The Nework visit had been a failure; but here was an unlooked-for little dividend—a shilling in the pound or so—of enjoyment at the very end of it. Though her affections had been thwarted, she was still young and pretty, and able to enjoy gems, and lace-shawls, as represented by bank-notes. Then she was to visit Aunt Jane again next

\* See ARGOSY, vol. iii., p. 295.

winter; so that, in spite of cruel fate, she returned home quite cheerful; and when the summer sun shone out on Barnston, she allowed it to shine on her as well as on the lilacs and the roses. Surely this was better than being a heroine, and hating Providence and the world because she had not had her own way. Of course she did require to make some little effort, with which she must be duly credited.

Worsted-work, novel-reading, and walks went on as heretofore—and so summer passes away. A few weeks at the sea-side, then harvest and stubble fields. Can it be a year since the Nework visit? And Arabella and her mother observe to each other that time flies, and that a year seems like nothing, now-a-days. A year it is, however, and the first week of November brought a pressing invitation from Aunt Jane. The old lady had been ill, and wanted very much to have her niece with her; but Arabella need not be afraid that her aunt was going to make a prisoner of her. Aunt Jane had been young herself, she said, and knew that young people liked gaiety. She would put her niece under the care of a friend of hers, a Mrs. Kidston, who would be a much more powerful chaperone than Aunt Jane herself.

The wheels of every trade and profession are moved in ways most incomprehensible to outsiders; and no profession is more mysteriously moved than the noble one of "getting on in society." Mrs. Kidston had been left a widow in Nework with two little girls when about forty years old. Her husband had not had a genius for getting on in society, so that at his death "good society" in Nework knew not the Kidstons. The widow, however, was a woman of energy, and gifted by nature. She saw that she had to do for self and daughters, and she set about the work resolutely. The grand test of feminine social genius is to be able to flatter men without offending women. The operation is the most difficult and delicate imaginable, but Mrs. Kidston possessed the requisite genius. She had a sting, too, which she could use when policy permitted. When she wanted an acquaintance she determinedly made it; and when she got a kick, as she very often did, she did not mind. Superfluous acquaintance—that is, acquaintance that did not help her on—she resolutely shunned. By these means she was now in the very best society in Nework. How in the world she got there is what nobody except her and me can understand. There she is, however, a proud monument of what can be done by perseverance and a good donkey-hide, impervious to kicks. It was no small matter for any young lady, having an eye to establishment in life, to be chaperoned by the great Mrs. Kidston. Both her daughters had married very far up in society indeed; and they had had neither good looks nor money.

How Aunt Jane came to have a pull upon Mrs. Kidston it would be tedious to narrate, the position being a complicated one. Judging from a conversation which took place at a call made by the former lady upon the latter, Aunt Jane must have felt herself strong.

"You will take my niece by the hand," she said, going direct to the point, "and introduce her advantageously. I know you can if you like."

"Anything to oblige you, my dear Mrs. Spence," said the blandest of feminine voices. "I said to myself when I heard the bell ring, 'I do hope that is my old friend Jane Spence come to see me.'"

"H'm!" said Aunt Jane. "When shall she call upon you, and what parties can you take her to?"

"Any niece of yours I shall be delighted to see at any time. I remember meeting Miss Arabella at the Walkers' last winter; and I recollect Mrs. Walker saying to me, 'Susan'—she always calls me 'Susan,' which, by the way, is rather being forward, I think—'Susan, *do* look at that girl—she is a perfect Hebe.' Then as to parties—let me see; Mrs. John W. Chambers is to have a dance next week. I don't know that I shall be going myself, but I could easily get——"

"I do not wish my niece to go anywhere that you are not going yourself," cut in Aunt Jane, decisively.

"Ah, well, perhaps, at first it is better not. And we shall have *plenty* of opportunities—no fear."

"Are not you to be at Lady Duddingston's on the 30th?"

"Well, Lady Duddingston always likes *me* to be at her parties; and I think it is very probable—but I am not quite sure—the fact is that——"

"That what?"

"Of course, if any one *could* take a liberty with her ladyship, I believe it is myself; but—but——"

"Nonsense, my dear Mrs. Kidston. Did not you take the Miss Lyals and Sarah Warrender and many others last year?" Mrs. Kidston laughed and gave in: "And you will see, now," continued Aunt Jane, in a suspicious tone of voice, "that she gets plenty of partners—and good ones; eh?"

"There will be nothing, my dear Mrs. Spence, at Lady Duddingston's but what *is* good, let me assure you of that. On the 30th there will be two peers of the realm, two baronets, one of seven, and the other of ten thousand a year. Mr. Innes Crawford will be there, the Dunups of Dunup, and many others of the very best position in the county. You may make your mind *quite* easy about Lady Duddingston's, my dear Mrs. Spence."

So assured, Aunt Jane departed. "Plague take her!" thought the great woman, as she closed the door upon her friend; "what does she mean by pestering me with her niece from the country. I wonder if she has a dress of a fashion more recent than three years ago. If she appears in that hideous yellow satin which she had on at the Walkers', Lady Duddingston will faint, and never forgive me. What an awful bore!"

And Mrs. Kidston was quite right. A position like hers, based on nothing material, can only be arrived at and maintained by constant attention to minutæ. There are enemies ever on the watch for a flaw. Like many other difficulties, however, this one turned out to be not so formidable as it had at first appeared. When Arabella called upon her the day after she arrived in Nework, Mrs. Kidston said to herself that the young woman was really much better than she had expected. She was pretty—no one could deny that; and experience told her that no argument was more powerful in society than beauty. What might be pronounced countrified in a plain woman might pass in a pretty one for an interesting tinge of rusticity. It was possible that Arabella might be a success—one could never tell. She might marry well, and so turn out a profit instead of a loss to her position.

It was arranged that Arabella should dress at Mrs. Kidston's on the important evening. Six other young ladies were to have the benefit of her generalship; but of the whole force at her disposal it seemed to the great woman that Miss Arabella stood most in need of a little special drill before the engagement; and it appeared to her that dressing would be a favourable occasion for the purpose.

"You will, I am sure, my dear, excuse an old friend of your aunt's," she said, scanning her pupil with a critical eye, and adding here and there a touch, "for giving you a few hints as to your—eh—demeanour—you understand. Town balls are very different from country ones, where every one is well known. At Lady Duddingston's you need not be afraid of meeting any one who is not good; still, there will be great differences; and a young man, you know, may have position, yet not be in circumstances to—to—you understand. You must be rigidly just, my dear; giving to every man what is due to him on account of his position and fortune. You had better not dance for the first half-hour or so, but sit beside me; and I will point out to you who is who among the men—who are eligible, and who are not. You will also have an opportunity of noting the demeanour of those young ladies who are accustomed to the ways of town. I shall point out some of the best examples to you, and you will soon be able to follow them, for I see that you are very quick and clever, my dear."

Quadrilles were being walked through when Mrs. Kidston and her army came on the field; so that the occasion was favourable for giving instruction. In half-an-hour's time Arabella knew the names, position, and prospects of every eligible gentleman in the room, as well a sporting man knows the "names, weights, and colours of the riders," in a race on which he has staked his money.

"And now, my dear," said Mrs. Kidston, "I shall ask Lady Duddingston to introduce a partner to you for the next waltz. But, between ourselves, I don't quite trust her ladyship; she has a daughter and two nieces on hand at present. If, however, you are at all at a loss in course of the evening, just catch my eye, for I shall watch over you. If I look solemn, be stiff to your partner. If I smile, be engaging to him."

The first partner introduced to Arabella was Mr. Maitland. Mr. Maitland hoped that he might have the pleasure of dancing with Miss Spence. Miss Spence, in imitation of the most approved model, languidly inclined her head in the affirmative; and the two immediately become an elemental part in a great rotatory storm of white muslin.

Mr. Maitland is a very chatty and pleasant young man; and Arabella, who is exhilarated by the dance, and has not had a surfeit of attention from men in her day, is exceedingly chatty and pleasant in return; so much was she excited, that she quite forgot to imitate any one, and became quite natural.

There is more dancing, then more chatting and laughing, till the eye of Arabella, wandering round the room, suddenly encounters the Kidston orb. The great woman's expression of eye is solemn. Her features are grave and rigid. The effect on Arabella was as if she had received an electric shock. The novelty of position had quite made her forget the lessons of the evening.

She had been rendering herself pleasant to quite a wrong person—indeed, an alarmingly wrong one, to judge from the expression of the Kidston face. The fact is, that though Mr. Maitland has a good position, he is totally impecunious. Lady Duddingston knows this, and so we may be sure does Mrs. Kidston.

"A thousand thanks, dear Lady Duddingston," says the latter lady to the former, "a thousand thanks for your kindness to Miss Spence. He is *such* a nice young man—Mr. Maitland. By the way" (here the voice sank to a confidential whisper), "some one was saying that he was rather sweet upon our darling Lizzy;" this was Lady Duddingston's daughter. "And now I am come to ask a favour," continued Mrs. Kidston; "and I am sure you will grant it. Will you introduce Mr. Innes Crawford to Miss Spence for next dance?"

Her ladyship being assiduously engaged in promoting a flirtation between Mr. Innes Crawford—of good family, and very rich—and her own daughter, the said darling Lizzy, looked rather venomous at this proposal, and at the remarks which had preceded it. She looked, indeed, as if it would have been much more in accordance with her feelings to have given the great Mrs. Kidston a slap in the face than to have complied with the request. However, Mrs. Kidston was a power with whom she could not afford to quarrel; so, like a wise woman of the world, she smiled pleasantly—*so* pleasantly—and said how truly glad she would be to do anything\* to please her dear Mrs. Kidston; but about Lizzy and Mr. Maitland, she did think that, *for once*, her friend had given ear too readily to mere tittle-tattle.

Thus it came to pass that Arabella's next partner was Mr. James Augustus Innes Crawford, only son of his father, and heir to a good and unencumbered estate. This time it was a quiet quadrille, so that Arabella had leisure, almost immediately on standing up, to go in search of the Kidston eye. She was not long in finding it; and, oh, how different the expression *now*, and that of the face in which it was set. The orb beamed with fond affection, and the features were radiant with intelligence.

But alas! now that it was proper to be lively and pleasant, poor Arabella found herself suddenly bereft of the power of being so. Nothing that she could say elicited more than a monosyllabic reply. She had recourse to that style of conversation known at balls and dances as the "catechetical," in which the conversationally-gifted partner asks the dummy questions respecting his or her tastes, habits, and pursuits, and what sights he or she may have been seeing in town, or may have seen during the course of his or her life. Thus, at the end of the first set, Miss Spence had the satisfaction of knowing, on Mr. Crawford's own authority, that he *did not* skate, that he *did* fish and shoot, that he *had* been lately at the Opera, that he considered that the rooms were hot now, but not so hot as they would be by and by; and that his views respecting mesmerism were not clearly defined. But he asked for no information in return; and a dreadful qualm came over Arabella. Could it be possible that it was not the fashion to speak in good society, or might good society have some language of its own which she did not understand? In her perplexity she went in search of Mrs. Kidston's eye. Its expression reassured



her. It was glowing upon her like the planet Venus in an April twilight. The fact simply was that Mr. Innes Crawford was as stupid as an owl.

If Arabella had been gifted with the faculty of reading her own consciousness, she would have known that, in spite of having excited a good deal of envy, she had not enjoyed this quadrille. She walked once round the room with Mr. Crawford in a state of unacknowledged misery, and then proposed to sit down.

"Do come and have an ice," said the intelligent man. These were almost the first words he had volunteered; and she was on the point of declining, but at that instant a gentle finger was laid upon her arm.

"Do, dearest, go with Mr. Crawford," it was the voice of the Kidston. "An ice I am sure will do you *no* harm. But take care, love, that you do not catch cold. Fasten your shawl carefully."

Mr. Crawford gallantly assisted in the operation suggested. The great tactician knew that at that instant the eyes of a hundred minds were fixed upon her; but she was equal to the occasion. Returning to her raised seat, she sat during the long hours, opera-glass in hand, calmly surveying the field of battle; now noting and counteracting the movements of the enemy, then manœuvring and encouraging her own forces with an admirable boldness and skill.

"You need not mind talking, my dear," she whispered to Arabella, in the course of the evening; "*animated* talk, in fact, is not desirable. Keep your voice low—this is fashionable, and besides, it suits you best. Smile, but don't laugh." She would like to have given one or two more hints, but she was a clever woman, who saw the error of over-teaching, or of doing anything to destroy confidence. "You are looking very nice, my love," she said, encouragingly. "I have heard one or two men ask who you are, and say we shall not say what, for fear of making you vain. You are doing very nicely, and I feel sure that Mr. Crawford will ask you to dance again."

The far-seeing woman was right. Mr. Crawford did ask her to dance again. This time she resolved to let him begin the conversation; but it was now after supper, which made a very considerable difference. By means of champagne, Mr. Crawford had divested himself of the constitutional shyness which habitually overcame him in the presence of women. He was, in fact, garrulous; the hero of his talk being himself.

"Don't you think that all poachers should be hanged, Miss Spence?"

Miss Spence suggested that perhaps being sent to Botany Bay might be a sufficient expiation for the crime in question.

"No, confound it, I say all poachers should be hanged, drawn, and quartered. And talking of poaching reminds me of the clever way I caught a fellow last year, &c., &c."

Then Mr. Crawford told a great many stories connected with the rustic sports of hunting and shooting, in none of which was there much point, except that he was the hero of them. Arabella, however, listened and smiled, and danced and looked pretty. She was a good dancer. She was tall and well dressed; and, in accordance with the advice of Mrs. Kidston, she spoke in a low tone of voice, and refrained from laughing. According to permission,

however, she smiled a good deal, and allowed her pretty teeth to be seen; her eyes also beamed intelligently.

And now the great tactician saw that the time had come for a master-stroke in that part of the general engagement in which Miss Arabella was concerned. She seized a moment when Mr. Crawford was disengaged to send to him one of her *aides-de-camp*—a widow lady who was paying court to her, with a view to promotion in society. The *aide-de-camp* was instructed to ask, casually as it were, and for the sake of information, who that lovely young lady in the white tarlatan and wild roses was, with whom Mr. Crawford had been dancing so much during the evening, and then to tell him, boldly, and without mincing the matter, that every one was saying that Mr. Innes Crawford and Miss Arabella Spence were much the handsomest couple in the room.

Mrs. Kidston herself afterwards took an opportunity—when no one was listening, we may be certain—of giving the same assurance to Mr. Crawford. Had he not been so thoroughly gorged with flattery, this finesse would have been superfluous; for his brain was dull and his natural appetite for the food in question gluttonous rather than epicurean. Looking, however, to the over-feeding which he had had in the course of his life, the finesse was judicious. Having eyed the bait askance just for a second or two, he decided that the evidence in favour of its being genuine was conclusive; and he sucked it down greedily as a trout does a May-fly.

Mr. Crawford requested permission to call upon Miss Spence to-morrow; and permission was granted.

"You will take care, my dear, when he calls," whispered the genius, at parting from her pupil, "to have the blinds partially drawn down, and be sitting with your back to the light. This is a rule invariably to be followed the day after a ball; and is a safe one at all times."

## CHAPTER II.

IN accordance with the advice of counsel, Miss Arabella was seated in her aunt's drawing-room at two o'clock in the afternoon of the day following Lady Duddingston's ball, with her back to the light, and the blinds partially drawn down.

At half-past two o'clock the door-bell rang, and a slight acceleration of pulse was the physical consequence, so far as Miss Spence was concerned. A gentleman's footstep is heard on the stair, the drawing-room door is thrown open, a pause of two seconds, and the servant announces—Mr. Francis Maitland.

Mr. Francis Maitland happening to be intimately acquainted with Mrs. Jane Spence, had thought himself entitled to call upon her niece without any formal asking of permission. In spite of the lessons of the night before, Arabella received her visitor with a smiling face, and an unsophisticated manner. If her style was not perfection, her nature was frank and genuine; and Mr. Maitland was replete with fun and good-nature. He was fond of jokes, which, though they might not seem very brilliant to the fastidious,

made Arabella laugh heartily. She thought him very witty and humorous indeed. He put her thoroughly at her ease; for she felt that he was not an observing man, and that if her laugh was not perfect in style, and if her accent had a tinge of Barnston about it, that he would not detect these flaws. And her good looks and cheerful face had made a profound impression upon him.

They pleased each other, and they were happy in each other's society, actually, for an hour and a half. The only drawback to Arabella's pleasure having been a continual dread lest Mr. Crawford should call. He had, however, felt himself too "seedy" for visiting. On the day following he arrived.

He had relapsed into taciturnity. She tried to talk to him about the ball, the weather, the theatres, &c.; but he was dumb. Nevertheless, he showed no disposition to make a short call. He sat quite placidly saying nothing, sublimely unconscious, apparently, of being a social dead weight. Though Arabella had not much sense of humour, she could not help wondering what would happen when the moment arrived of her own conversational bankruptcy. She was not very clever at inventing talk, and the crisis was evidently at hand. It came at last—for the soul of her she could not find another word to say to him. A dead pause—the situation was really growing awful—when, lo, out of the darkness, there leapt a sudden light.

All at once, apropos of nothing, he began to maunder about himself—his own achievements by field and river, and the compliments that had been paid to him. The duke had struck him enthusiastically on the shoulder, and said, "By Jove! he wished that he could take a fence like that." The duchess had asked for his photograph on horseback. When he landed the twenty-pound salmon with trout-tackle, old Tom Burton, the fisherman, had said that there was not another man in the country who could have done the same.

In short, it was plain that the only subject of conversation in which Mr. Innes Crawford took any interest was himself; and being of a genuine and truthful nature, he did not condescend to feign an interest where he did not feel it. On his one topic, however, he was inexhaustible, warranted, apparently, like Mr. Tennyson's brook, to "go on for ever."

Arabella's perceptions of character were not very delicate; but with all her wish to view Mr. Crawford in a favourable light, she could not conceal from herself that she was very glad when his visit was over. "*Suppose* such a thing to happen," she reflected, when he went away, "as that both Mr. Maitland and Mr. Crawford should propose to her, which should she have?"

She had no intellectual vision, which raised her above the gods of the world. Money and Rank were in her eyes splendours undimmed by philosophic thought; and there passed before her a dazzling vision of handsome houses in town and country, splendid equipages, glittering jewellery, and status in society. But a man or woman may be what is called "worldly"—that is, may be keenly interested in the ordinary game of life—and yet not heartless. Like many a cleverer person, Arabella would dearly have liked to be rich and great; but then there was also a necessity felt to have some one

to love and share the pleasant things with her. She would not have felt it very keenly had her husband been moderately stupid and illiterate, had he been kind and affectionate; for she was a type of that excellent womanhood to which it comes easy and natural to see all that it loves exactly as it wants to see it. Her husband or her brother, if kind to her, will be the very best and wisest and handsomest husband or brother in the world. Her baby will be the very wonderfullest baby that ever was born.

But is Mr. Innes Crawford a man who can possibly ever love anything or any one in the world but himself?

### CHAPTER III.

It had been an excellent rule of Mrs. Kidston's life, and one to which she doubtless owed much of her success, to do whatever she did energetically. Arabella having been a success at Lady Duddingston's ball, the wise woman resolved to push her in the matrimonial market; for did she not owe much of the high position which she occupied to the great alliances which she had been the means of forming for various young friends of hers?

She took Arabella to hear the fashionable preachers—a step which was necessary to enable her to join in Newmarket fashionable conversation; and though not of a speculative or theological turn of mind, Miss Spence soon became able to discuss the merits and styles of the various “guns” in an edifying and improving manner. She became able to argue in favour of the superiority of round church to square church, without having the very dimmest shadow of a notion in what respect they differed from each other; and, to say the truth, she was too good-natured to care. Like many others, she had objects in which she was really interested, and others in which she supposed herself to be interested.

Aunt Jane also, both by precept and example, contributed largely at this time to the cultivation of her niece. “There are two especial points, my dear,” she said to her, “in which those who have not had the advantage of early training, unless naturally of very superior mind, are sure to betray themselves. I mean *mirth* and *curiosity*. A woman of second-rate breeding may pass so long as very quiet; but let her be amused, and she infallibly betrays herself. No woman of unladylike mind can cheat me in her laughter or in the gestures which accompanies it. Again, you asked me what I saw to object to in Miss Sarah Williamson, when she was calling here the other day. Why, when I told her that I was engaged to dinner, she instantly asked quite eagerly where I was going to. Such breeding, my dear, positively makes me shudder when I am brought in contact with it. Curiosity shows social jealousy, which no lady should ever feel; or, if she does feel it, she ought at least to be too proud to show it.”

Miss Spence, luckily, was devoid of that kind of touchy vanity which is generally dignified by the name of “sensitiveness.” She could bear to have her defects indicated to her, or even to be directly told of them, without getting angry or testy, or without feeling any wish to retaliate. She was very grateful to her aunt for her kindness to her; and the result of this happy

moral arrangement was that she improved wonderfully and in a very short time. Had she been clever and conceited, she would probably never have improved at all. She ceased to use adjectives for adverbs, and bid fair very soon to acquire the other little minutiae which were necessary to satisfy her fastidious relative.

She went to many balls and parties, which she enjoyed thoroughly. She was very happy; and a little of the pleasure and enjoyment suited to her age and temperament seemed to have been all that was wanting to make her very lovable. Through the dexterous management of Mrs. Kidston, she very frequently met and danced with Mr. Innes Crawford. But all the efforts of the astute old lady were inadequate to prevent frequent meetings with Mr. Maitland also; and it may as well be here mentioned that Mr. Maitland had fallen over head and ears in love with Miss Arabella.

This was a very foolish proceeding on his part, for two reasons. In the first place, it was a vulgar error to wish to marry a woman solely because she was pretty. In the second place, it was also an error for a man moving in aristocratic society in New York to wish to marry, when his patrimony only yielded him a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and his annual professional income was under ten pounds. He was a barrister waiting for business, and to all appearance business might yet keep him waiting for some time. He had some hopes of a good appointment if the Whigs would only go out; but as the Whigs were at that time remarkable for not going out, Mr. Maitland's choosing to fall in love with a penniless young woman must be regarded as altogether foolish and weak-minded.

The poor demented mortal spent his days in trying to construe looks and smiles and scraps of political intelligence. When in a sanguine humour, he thought that the shake of the hand with which she had last bid him good-night was of a favourable character, and that the *Morning Herald* was probably well informed in expecting a majority against the government on the approaching division. At other times he grew very doleful. He could not make it out. Now she seemed to encourage him, and again she was cold and distant.

But there was no wonder that he was puzzled; for she did not at all know her own mind. To marry on nothing but prospects was out of the question; but suppose he got an appointment of five hundred or six hundred pounds a year what would she say then? She liked him; indeed, by some curious arrangement of nature, she might almost be said to love him. Suppose, however, that Mr. Crawford were to offer in the meantime—and the vision of worldly splendour flitted before her as it was wont to do at times. If Mr. Innes Crawford had only been just a little less disagreeable than he was, she might have succeeded in persuading herself that she admired him, for she had a fair average power of self-deception.

The demeanour of Mr. Crawford meanwhile was perplexing. Having been frequently assured from apparently quite independent sources that Miss Spence and he were a strikingly handsome couple, he had come to have a great admiration for Arabella; but he knew that the match was one which his father would certainly disapprove of; and though he could take his own



way when roused, he rather shrank from an encounter with his sire, who was about as amiable as an old bull.

Mrs. Kidston was annoyed. Her protégée might be compromised, if the flirtation did not end soon, as all flirtations ought to end. However, she did not cease to scheme and flatter in the full belief of a final triumph.

#### CHAPTER IV.

EVERY one of course remembers that, in the spring of 1855, the Whigs did go out, and the Tories come in. This was an exciting event for Mr. Francis Maitland, for had not he an intimate friend, who knew a man who knew another man who was a friend of a cabinet minister? Then, as if there was a special providence in the matter, an office had just become vacant, that he felt himself to be the very man for. Six hundred a year and very little to be done. He felt certain that he would get the appointment; for surely things could never have been so arranged just on purpose to disappoint him. As, however, six hundred pounds a year and little to do present attractive features to a great many men, and as Providence is supposed to help those who help themselves, Mr. Maitland wisely resolved to leave no stone unturned in order to secure the prize. Friends in town and country were applied to, and he himself set off to London to call on the cabinet minister. He expected to return in triumph, when he meant to lay himself and his fortunes at the feet of Miss Arabella Spence. There had been a time when he had been devoured with jealousy of that rich beast Innes Crawford; nor was he quite happy yet about him. Still he flattered himself that if Mr. Crawford really had been in love with her that he would have proposed long ago.

Meanwhile the mind of Mr. Innes Crawford, which had for some time been oscillating between his admiration for Miss Spence and a lazy disinclination to have a row with his father, came to be made up in quite a remarkable manner.

Nature had blessed Mr. Crawford, senior, with one of the most furious tempers that ever fell to the lot of mortal man. When he scolded any of his servants out of doors, it has been asserted that the noise could be heard a mile off in the direction of the wind. Though generally speaking in a rage, there were intervals during which he was a tender-hearted and rather sentimental man; and he passed from one frame of mind to another with a rapidity very curious to be seen, and also highly amusing, if you did not happen to be his wife, his daughter, or his servant. His medical man was of opinion that his humour depended on his food. "As you value your peace and happiness, my dear madam," he would say to Mrs. Crawford, "don't let your husband eat suppers. You may blame the lobster-salad for the fracture of that china vase. If he expresses any wish for toasted cheese and porter before going to bed to-night, don't give them to him, or your drawing-room mirror won't survive to-morrow."

Mr. James Augustus himself was not blessed with the temper of an angel; and when father and son met, the effect was not unfrequently like that caused

by the collision of two thunder-clouds, the electricity discharging itself on the heads of the weaker members of the household.

It happened, one day, when the senior had been in Nework transacting business, that some one congratulated him on the approaching marriage of his son and heir. He was a most bland and polite man in public. He smiled graciously, and inquired the name of his future daughter-in-law, as he did not happen to know it. The name was that of Miss Arabella Spence. He only wished it were true, he replied to his informant, who was a lady. He would be the last man to oppose his dear boy's wishes. He was a white-haired old gentleman, with a benevolent smile that was irresistible.

He rode home wild with fury. He had not got some money which he had expected—a circumstance of itself sufficient to reduce him to the condition of a lunatic.

Having emitted a few sparks, which had the effect of knocking down a servant or two, he pulled the bell so violently that the handle came off.

"Tell Mr. James—speak—instantly," he gasped out to the man who answered his summons. Son having appeared. "What the d—l is the meaning of this, sir?" he shouted; "of this absurd, idiotical report, sir; marry a penniless rustic—and without asking my leave, sir."

"I will marry whoever I like, sir," roared the son, "d—d if I don't."

"D—d if you do, sir," bellowed the parent. "Don't speak—don't contradict your father, sir! I am the last man in the world to lose my temper, but d—d it, sir, don't contradict me! for this is just the one thing which makes me angry."

"I'll marry whom I like—it is no business of yours," replied son, sulkily.

"Then, by Jove, sir, I will cut you off with a bad shilling! You have the devil's own temper, and from whom you inherit it I can't guess. It must be from your poor mother, I suppose. Open the door and the window, I feel quite faint, I tell you. It is very wrong in you, James, my dear boy, to vex your poor grey-haired old papa in this way. Look at me—I am always calm."

The dear boy had, however, rushed out of the house in a fury. The ice was broken, and he was glad of it. He would let the old tyrant see that he was a man, and meant to have his own way. He did not mind the threat of being scratched out of the paternal testament, for two good reasons. In the first place, it was generally made twice or thrice in the week; and, in the second place, the estate was entailed.

And thus it happened, one February afternoon, that Miss Arabella Spence had the offer made to her of the heart and fortune of Mr. James Augustus Innes Crawford. Was not she to be envied? The Crawfords were almost the oldest family in the county. Innes Hall was an unencumbered estate, worth eight thousand a year. Was not this rather a different story from being a poor and friendless old maid in Barnston?

Mr. Crawford was the best match of the season. Peers and peeresses would grace his wedding. The newspapers would give a detailed account of it. There would be dinners to tenantry, speeches, and bonfires. What would Barnston say to it? What would Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Playfair say to it?

What visions of silks and laces and sparkling gems must have floated through her woman's mind. He had offered her a diamond ring worth a hundred pounds—had she taken it?

## CHAPTER V.

ON the morning of the day on which the important event recorded in the last chapter took place, Miss Arabella Spence had received a letter bearing the London post-mark. Were I to transcribe this letter I am sure that it would appear to the sensible reader, as it certainly does to me, about the most silly of conceivable compositions.

The writer was that wise young man, Mr. Francis Maitland, who was then under an impression that unless Miss Arabella Spence consented to marry him the rest of his life would be of a very gloomy complexion indeed. It was not yet settled who was to get the appointment. He had very strong hopes of it; but, even if unsuccessful, it could not possibly be long before Government did something for him. "The duke" was in town, and had promised to use his influence in his favour. The whole of what may be called the business part of the letter was rational enough; there was an honest and manly tone about it. But then there followed a flood of very sad nonsense indeed.

It did not, however, appear nonsense to Arabella, who was not any wiser than the writer. She read the incoherent rubbish over and over again; and, to speak the truth, I believe she liked the most idiotic parts best.

If she was a good deal excited we need not be surprised. It does not happen to every young woman to have two offers of marriage in one day. And poor Arabella was no philosopher. Instead of having renounced the pomps and the vanities of this wicked world, it was a singular element in her otherwise every-day character, to be quite warmly attached to them. No one could have felt more keenly the difference between five hundred a year and twice as many thousands—between being the wife of a briefless barrister, and the [wife of a] wealthy landed proprietor. Oh, perverse fate, why did not Innes Hall belong to Mr. Francis Maitland?

She had not accepted Mr. Crawford's diamond ring, but neither had she positively said that she would not. She had promised to write to him, so that he should receive the letter to-morrow morning.

It was not even as if Mr. Maitland had got his appointment—perhaps he might not get it—and no one could tell how soon the Whigs might be in again. The young woman wisely resolved to take counsel with Aunt Jane, before taking any decided step.

The old lady had been to some extent cognizant of her niece's *affaires de cœur*; but she had not hitherto given any advice, having wisely resolved to give none until it was asked for. She had thought much, however, if she had spoken little; and the facts of the case being laid before her, her opinion was not long in being given. Judgment ran as follows:—

"Were the question merely one between what people call 'love' on the one hand, and what they call 'worldliness' on the other, I believe I am wicked enough to have advised you to follow worldliness. Affluence—which means

the absence of the swarm of petty cares which daily fret and irritate the temper of those whose means are inadequate to their position—is a much more likely soil for spiritual love to grow out of than a fleeting fancy, which will not outlast your first drawing-room carpet. Money, my dear, is to every one the possibility of being his or her moral and intellectual best. If you are a poor woman, you may no doubt bring up your children to have a tender regard in all they say and do for the reasonable self-love of others. You may teach them to despise falsehood, to reverence truth and honour; and so your children may grow up in the highest sense of the words *ladies* and *gentlemen*. But there are a thousand minutæ of looks, tones, and gestures which give the outward stamp of a lady or a gentleman, which it is hard or impossible for the mother of a family to cultivate in her children, where her mind is on the stretch all day to save a daily shilling.

“From all this you are doubtless expecting that I am going to advise you to decide in favour of Mr. Crawford; but I would not recommend you, or any woman, to marry a man of bad principle, or bad temper, or who was your inferior in intellect, whatever be his social position. There is no pleasure in married life unless a man is, to a reasonable extent, possessed of these qualities, which a woman naturally respects, or has been trained by her education to respect. I would rather see you even very poorly married than married to an ill-tempered fool, such as Mr. Crawford seems to be. If Mr. Maitland had only got this appointment, I would then say that he had what should be very ample means for you. Moreover, my dear, I do not think that *you* would be happier for being thrown into a higher position than you have been accustomed to move in.”

Whoever may approve of these unromantic sentiments of Aunt Jane must give Miss Spence some credit, as she acted in accordance with them; and it is scarcely probable that she would so have acted had her own feelings not been in harmony with them. I don't say, be it remembered, that she took the advice because it was good and sensible. This may have been the reason; but I rather suspect she took it because she liked the conclusion to which it led. She declined Mr. Crawford's offer. And when it was reported in Barnston that Miss Arabella Spence had refused a landed proprietor with eight thousand a year, the report was by no means universally believed in.

I am very happy to say that Mr. Francis Maitland actually did get the appointment; and on the 3rd day of May, 185-, Miss Arabella Spence became Mrs. Francis Maitland. Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Playfair were present at the wedding, and presented the bride with a handsome silver tea-set.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Maitland have comfortable means, excellent health, and there is no especial intellect on either side. Surely with these advantages, positive and negative, they ought to be “happy.”



